



# Improving the Customer Service Level through efficient Business-to-Business Marketing Communication



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Improving the Customer Service Level through efficient Business-to-Business Marketing Communication  
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The purpose of this thesis was to analyze the current satisfaction level of OLDI's business-to-business retail customer services and improving the level of customer services in the electronics business through efficient business-to-business marketing communication. Therefore the main objective of the study was to discover ways to improve the business-to-business marketing communications and to increase the level of OLDI's retail customer services. Another purpose was to investigate whether OLDI has been successful in its business-to-business marketing communications and its customers' satisfaction level.

OLDI (OLEG & DIMA) is one of the leading IT companies in Russia, with 3,500 regional dealers, 2500 highly skilled professionals and 25,000 square meters of logistics area. The main business operation is to distribute computer equipment, peripherals and office equipment.

The theoretical section of the thesis concentrates on customer service, marketing strategy, business-to-business marketing communication, integrated marketing communication strategy and marketing communication mix. The data for the theoretical section was collected from literature and internet sources. The empirical section was conducted by interviewing the case company's vice president, employees and also by sending a questionnaire to OLDI's retail customers and telephone interviews.

This research was conducted by using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research method with the emphasis on quantitative method. The questionnaire was conducted with four sections and each section contained multiple-choice questions and open questions. Information was also collected from OLDI's annual reports, webpage and the vice president of the company. This research concerned the frequency of participation in OLDI's business-to-business marketing communications, customers' opinion on the successfulness of OLDI's business-to-business marketing communications. In addition, it also concentrates on the satisfaction level of OLDI's customer service. The research concluded that OLDI has been able to be successful in its business-to-business marketing communication tools, and its customer service also has been able to satisfy its customers.

Key words: Business-to-business, marketing communication, customer behavior, customer service.

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## 1 Introduction

In modern business competitiveness, a company has to consider its competitors, develop its service processes in continual extent. This will help meet its immediate and potential customer perceptions and for business continued existence. This can be done as a means of dialogue among both internal and external business operational mechanisms which is also a way of marketing communication. Marketing communication is the dimension whereby companies are able to discuss their products, services and benefits with their customers. Developing the marketing communication allows the building of relationships and service customers efficiently.

Marketing communication is a continually changing field which involves new theories, new technologies, cultural changes and technological advantages. All these combine to create a dynamic environment within which marketers try to ensure that their messages are received by their target audiences. Marketing communications increase the image and awareness in the minds of the target audiences. This thesis therefore was to investigate the customer service characteristics in the electronics business and its implications on marketing communication.

### 1.1 Scope of the study

Developing the customer service and business-to-business marketing communication with the clients and potential customers has become one of the most important element in modern business. The main purpose of the research was to measure whether the provision of customer service was satisfactory in the research company OLDI through its efficient marketing communication. Again, it was to focus on how to improve the case company's customer services in its business operations through efficient business-to-business marketing communication.

The interest of this research comes among the fact of being involved in OLDI as an employee and also as specialization in studies of International Business-to-Business marketing as a Business Management student.

The company OLDI is a Russian electronic distributor and includes three areas of business activities dealers, retailers, and distributors. The current marketing communication and customer services operation of this company were investigated during this research, and recommendations made.

## 1.2 Choice of the research

There are many reasons that contributed to the choice of research context. First, according to Mr. Tamal Parvez (Interview 2009), vice president of the case company, "there are many business-to-business companies that can improve their customer service in order to satisfy their customers through the development of efficient marketing communication and business networking". The research topic was chosen after initial discussions with Mr. Parvez, President of the Oy STN Electronics Ltd-Finland and also vice president of the regional sales division of the case company.

This company has a positive reputation in distribution of electronic products in the Russian Federation. Personal observations as an employee of OLDI's partner company (Oy STN Electronics Ltd-Finland) helped with the assessment of the marketing communication and customer services. This research also interests the company due to the fact of its related current business operations and the future objective. There are many customer services offered by OLDI which are also a tool of marketing communication. For this reason the topic was chosen to improve the customer service level thorough efficient business-to-business marketing communications.

In addition, improved business-to-business marketing communication could offer an opportunity for solution in efficiency of customer service in a company such as OLDI. This research concentrates on customer service in the electronics business through efficient business-to-business marketing communication and also on the views of customers on how successful OLDI has been in its business-to-business marketing communications.

## 1.3 Purpose of the study

However, the main objective of the research was to measure whether the current customer service level is satisfactory and how the case company views the customers' needs and for improvement of the service level. Another purpose of the research was to discover the current satisfaction level in the context of business-to-business marketing communications in relation to the views and opinions of the case company.

The research was also conducted to aid the planning of future services and marketing communications through improving cooperation between customers and suppliers of OLDI. The view is that this research will also be suitable for use by any company in the electronic industry. It will be applicable to marketing managers in the field of electronics as it helps in determining the framework required to give customer satisfaction through marketing communication.

#### 1.4 Structure of the study

This research consists of six main sections. The first is the introduction section which describes the objectives, scope of the studies, and choice of the studies as well as the purpose. The second section, theoretical background, has a generalized framework of business services and marketing communications theories.

The methodology section was to describe how the research has been completed and the data research collection. In this section the validity and reliability of the research was also introduced. The empirical section focused on how to apply the theoretical framework to the real case of the research, which helps to analyze the current customer service of OLDI and its successful level of marketing communication as well.

The conclusion section is a summary of the research, the findings of survey results and recommendation for the case company's future customer service and marketing communications level improvement. Figure 1 below illustrates the structure of the thesis.

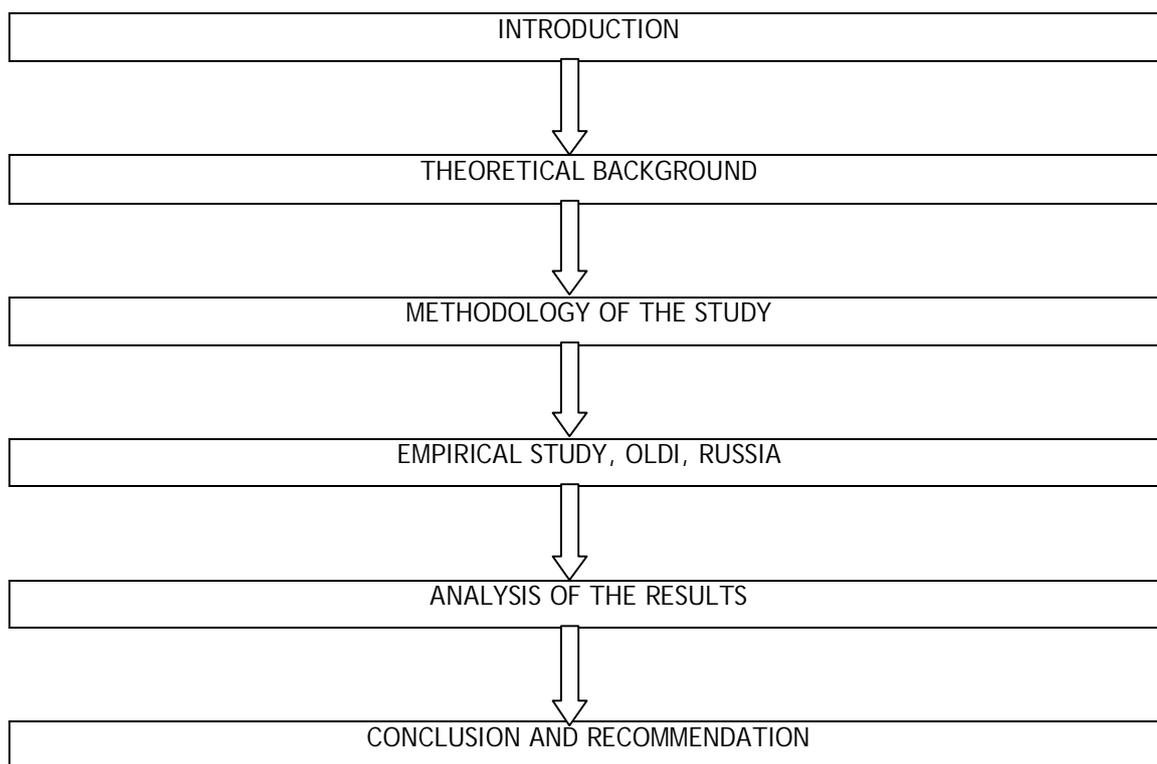


Figure 1: The structure of the study

## 2 Theoretical background

This section as described on the previous page is the theoretical background of the thesis. The theoretical section was divided into two parts; one was service which includes some small sections to support the whole thesis, its analytical sections and the main research problem. The second part of the theoretical section concentrates on marketing, marketing strategy, integrated marketing communication strategy, business-to-business marketing communications and marketing communication mix. These two parts of the theoretical section was chosen for this thesis as vital and interrelated with the main research problem. In addition, the main purpose of the theoretical section was to support the whole analytical section.

### 2.1 Services

According to Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons (2006, 4), "a service is a time-perishable, intangible experience performed for a customer acting in the role of co-producer". "A service is any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another which is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything" (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, Wong 2002, 535).

Figure 2 presents below the total theoretical section of services of the thesis.

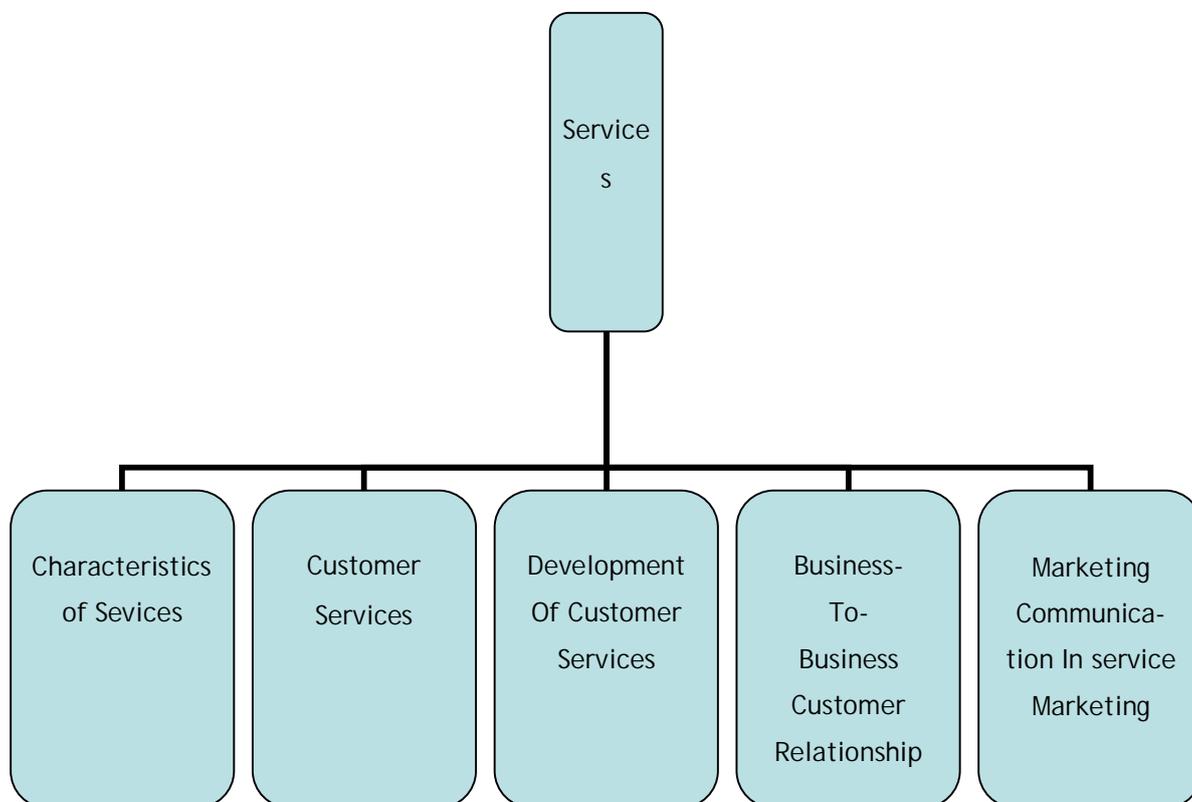


Figure 2: Theoretical section of services

### 2.1.1 Characteristics of services

Grönroos (2006, 52) defines services as “a process consisting of a series of more or less intangible activities that normally, but not necessarily always, take interactions between the customer and service employees or physical resources or goods or systems of the service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems”. He further identifies three basic characteristics of service. Firstly, services are processes consisting of activities. Secondly, those services are to some extent produced and consumed simultaneously, and finally, in the service production process the customers have a moderate influence on the process. (Grönroos .2006, 53)

Further services are normally perceived in a subjective manner as can be described by customers with such words as experience, trust, feeling, and security. Nowadays, customer services have become a major matter as they help to keep business operations actively. The main view is that companies are more interested in service management in order to gain competitive advantage. (Grönroos 2006, 52-54)

### 2.1.2 Customer services

According to Harris (2005, 2) “Customer service is anything we do for the customer that enhances the customer experience. Customers have varying ideas of what they expect from customer interaction. The customer service provider must get to know his/her customers and strive to provide them with excellent customer service”.

One of the most effective and expensive ways to keep the market in a favorable position for a business is through excellent customer service and the importance of customer services is always high. Nowadays, it is not enough to provide a product and service to the customer, but along with a product the customer service has the most important role in the business activities. (Harris 2005, 2-3)

### 2.1.3 Development of customer services

To be successful in nowadays business, it is essential to commit to excellence in customer service. Every customer has some basic requirements from the company, and this customer service is the essential first requirement. (Harris 2006, 4-5)

Customer service is such a valuable concept that it seems to be simple to provide, but in a real situation it is not. Assessing the customer service level is one of the most important sectors to develop the customer service. After assessing their strengths and weaknesses, custom-

er service providers will begin to understand the customers they are serving. This assessment may help to prepare the company to provide its customers with excellent customer services. By becoming familiar with the various barriers to customer service, recognizing the power of perceptions, understanding exceptions, and maintaining their own credibility and sense of values, customer service providers are equipping themselves to fully understand how to serve their customers. (Harris 2006, 15)

Harris (2006, 15 - 19) continues by saying that customer service must be performed to provide the company with a periodic self-evaluation platform to assess its effectiveness and identify areas that need improvement. When the assessment is made, the individuals must take the initiative to make changes and must monitor themselves so that they do not return into previous habits.

#### 2.1.4 Business-to-business customer relationship

To understand the customer relationship between companies and the clients or customers is one of the most important sections in business operations. To be competitive in the market, companies need to understand how customer relationships can be managed. A sale in a business market is an identifiable event and it is also a complex process which involves several interactions, discussion, adaptation and negotiations. (Ford, Gadde, Håkansson, Lundgren, Snehota, Turnbull & Wilson 1998, 151- 152)

In business operational activities, the first sales are very important for all companies, because that will determine whether the pattern of repeated orders will be implemented. The whole process of selling makes a good relationship between suppliers and customers and it indicates whether the business relationship will be for a long time or not. The features of a company's customer relationship are the outcome of both the suppliers, customers and any partnership related to them. (Ford et al 1998, 152-153)

A customer relationship involves many resources such as time management, sales, product, services, processes, logistics and administrations with each having to be allocated among the different customer needs and preferences. (Ford et al 1998, 153)

A customer relationship varies much in its nature and importance. For example, some customers are individually insignificant; some may be distant, impersonal, and even hostile. Therefore, it is important to have a good customer portfolio by analyzing and also common for a company in business marketing to have a relatively small number of important, close customer relationships on which its future depends. (Ford et al 1998, 153)

### 2.1.5 Extended marketing mix

One of the most important and basic concepts of marketing is the marketing mix; this is the concept which defines the main requirements of satisfying customers who are involved with the service of the company or organizations. The traditional marketing mix is composed of the four P's: product, price, place and promotion. These are the elements with which the core elements of a business marketing mix depend. However, the strategy for the four P's requires some modifications when applied to service and its decisions are related to sales, advertising, sales promotions, and publicity. In services these factors are important because services are produced and consumed simultaneously, and in addition, service delivery people (such as clerks, ticket takers, nurses, and telephone personnel) are also involved in real time promotion of the service. (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler 2006, 26-27)

### 2.1.6 Marketing communication in service marketing context

To become successful in the context of business operation, it is important to have an integrated marketing communication for services afterward for goods. External communications and integrated communication channels can be integrated to create consistent service promises. To do that, internal marketing communication needs to be managed, so that employees and the company are in agreement about what is communicated to the customers. There are several internal marketing communication tools which need to be managed by the company in order to satisfy the target group of customers. These approaches for integrating services marketing communications are managing customer expectations, managing service promises, managing internal marketing communication and improving customer education. (Zeithaml et al 2006, 488, 500)

## 2.2 Marketing

Kotler (2006, 5) in his definition says that "marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they want through creating and exchanging value with other". Moreover, according to the American Marketing Association (2007), marketing is "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large".

### 2.2.1 Business-to-business marketing

According to the American Marketing Association (2009), industrial marketing or business-to-business marketing is "the marketing of goods and services to industrial markets". In other words, it is whereby goods and services are marketed among companies, organizations or

industries. According to Vitale and Giglierano (2002, 5), business-to-business marketing is “the process of matching and combining the capabilities of the supplier with desired outcomes of the customers to create value for the “customer’s customer” and, hence, for both organizations”.

## 2.2.2 Company and marketing strategy

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2006, 37) marketing strategy or strategic planning is “the process of developing and maintaining a strategic fit between the organization’s goals and capabilities and its changing marketing opportunities. It involves defining a clear company mission, setting supporting objectives, designing a sound business portfolio, and coordinating functional strategies”. At the corporate level, all companies start to set their strategic planning process by defining the overall objectives, mission and targets. The strategic planning has a mission, which gives an overall suggestion of what has to be acquired in the near future from the market and how it is going to be managed and acquired. In turn, each business and product develops detailed marketing and other operational plans that support the company’s wide plan. (Kotler & Armsterong (2006, 37-39).

### 2.2.2.1 SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis is a premeditated preparation method which is used for measuring a company’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It helps the company to specify the objectives of its business projects and identify the internal and external factors that are interconnected with achieving the target objective(s). A SWOT analysis helps to define in advance the main objective or goal of the desired project of the company. (Wikipedia 2009)



Figure 3: SWOT Analysis

(Source: Wikipedia webpage)

Figure 3 shows how organizations' or individual personality SWOT analysis could give the impression. The elaboration of each letter of SWOT is explained as follows.

Strengths indicate a company or person's ability to achieve the target and also come as attributes of the company or person that are helpful to achieving the set objective or goals. (Wikipedia 2009)

Weaknesses show the company's or person's limited capabilities to reach the objective and attributes of the company or person and in a way become harmful to achieving the target. (Wikipedia 2009)

Opportunities is a tool of SWOT analysis, that indicates that the person or company have some external conditions that help for the achievement of the set objective. (Wikipedia 2009)

Threats an external condition that cannot damage the business performance but it is a threat for the company for near future operations. (Wikipedia 2009)

#### 2.2.2.2 Product market expansion grid

Marketing has the main responsibility for achieving profitable growth for the company and it should assess. Although identifying the problem of the market and realize the proper solution for the company's growth is of paramount's in this regard. The time of marketing to select market opportunities and strategies for capturing them should be considered. The product or market expansion grid is a useful device for identifying growth opportunities, shown in table 1. (Kotler & Armsterong 2006, 41)

	Existing products	New Product
Existing Markets	Market Penetration	product development
New Markets	Market development	Diversification

Table 1: The product or market expansion grid

Market penetration is the "strategy for company growth by increasing sales of current products to current market segments without changing the product". (Kotler & Armsterong 2006, 41)

Market development is “a strategy for company growth by identifying and developing new market segments for current company products”. (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 41)

Product development is “a strategy for company growth through starting up or acquiring businesses outside the company’s current products and markets” (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 41)

Diversification is “a strategy for company growth through starting up or acquiring businesses outside the company’s current products and markets”. (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 41)

### 2.2.3 Marketing mix

The marketing mix is created by combining the tools of four Ps - product, price, place and promotion - in order to produce a favorable response in the target market these components can be mixed together in infinite number of ways. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 56 - 57) the exchange process between the customer and the company is managed by researching the needs of the stakeholders: by identifying, selecting and targeting a certain group of stakeholders sharing similar needs and characteristics. Together these activities form the marketing mix. (Fill 1999, 4- 6)

According to John O’Shaughnessey (1984) “product, price, promotion and distribution are factors that, within limits, are capable of being influenced or controlled”. In marketing, one such conceptual framework that is particularly useful in helping practitioners structure of thinking marketing problems and the main concept of the problems is this marketing mix, which are the four marketing ‘Ps’. Marketing strategy can be viewed as reflecting a marketing mix of these four elements. Every marketing strategy has its own marketing logic whereby excellence for one element of the mix, whether product, price, promotion or distribution, is often a necessary condition for success. (Baker & Hart, 2008, 247)

According to Kotler (2000, 15) marketing mix is “the set of marketing tools that the firm uses to pursue its marketing objectives in the target market”. In Kotler’s book McCarthy’s marketing mix classification has that marketing mix tools divided into four broad groups that are called “4Ps” of marketing; product, price, place and promotion. The particular marketing variables under each of the 4Ps are shown next page in figure 4.

#### 2.2.3.1 Product

A product can refer to that which is produced or manufactured to satisfy a certain desire or meet certain perception needs. According to Jobber & Fahy (2003, 330) product “is a good or service offered or performed by an organization or individual, which is capable of satisfying

customers needs". The product decision involves determining what goods, services, organizations, people, place or ideas to market. It also involves a number of items to sell and the level of quality of the products. In addition, the product involves some other factors such as the innovativeness of the company, packaging of the goods, warranties of products, and finally indicate expire date of the existing goods. (Evans & Berman 1994, 37)

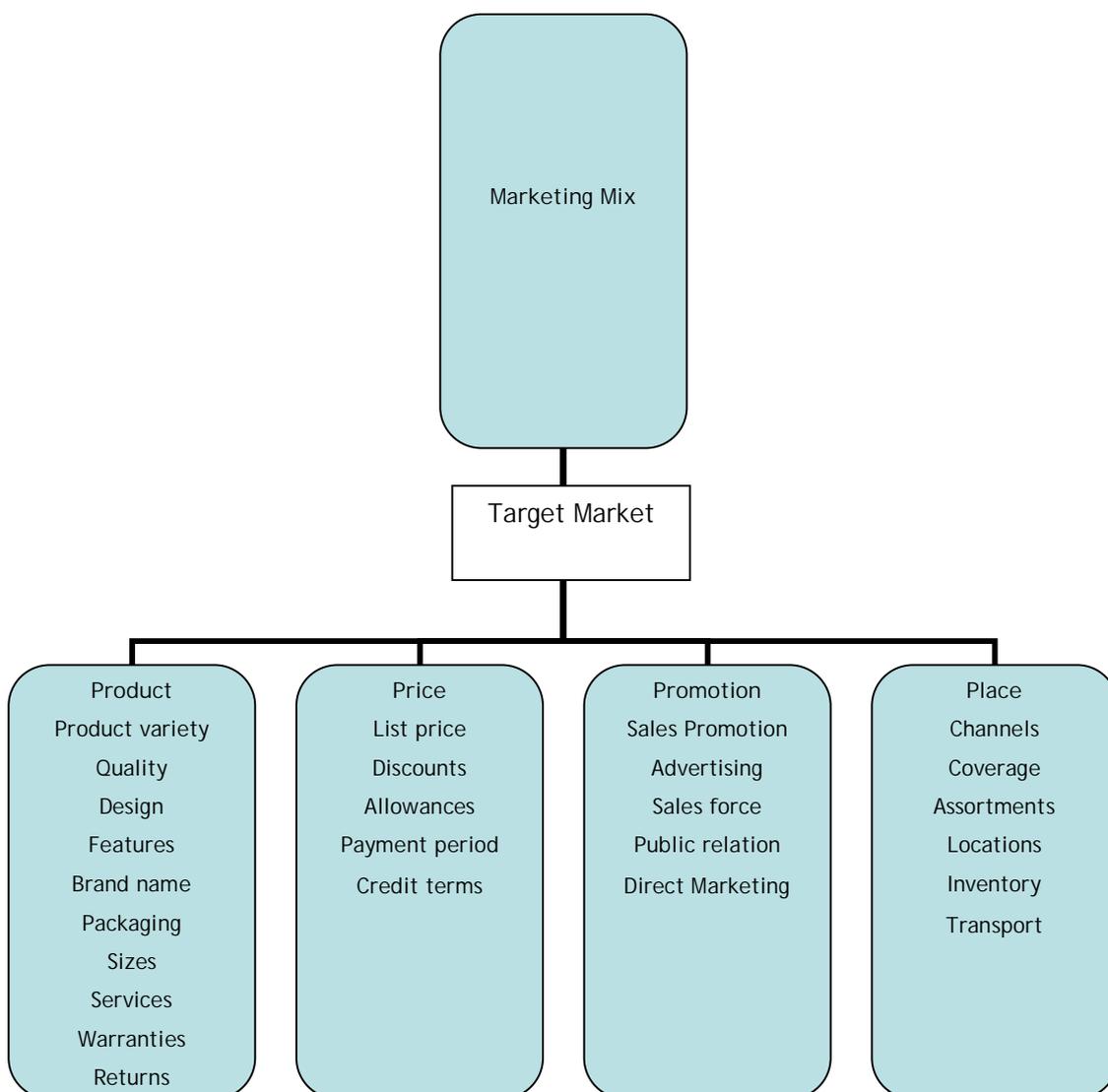


Figure 4: The four P components of the marketing mix.

(Sources: Kotler & McCarthy)

#### 2.2.3.2 Price

Price is defined as "(1) the amount of money paid for a product; (2) the agreed value placed on the exchange by a buyer and seller". (Jobber & Fahy 2003, 330) The price of a product or services is what the final customers want to buy the goods otherwise willing to pay for the

product and service. In the pricing decision the relationship between price and quality varies on the final sale and consumer buying behaviors, including the overall level of prices such as low, medium, or high. (Evans & Berman 1994, 37)

#### 2.2.3.3 Place

The place is the most important part of the marketing mix, which refers to where consumers and seller meet to make the final selling and purchasing decision. Jobber & Fahy (2003, 330) explain place as "the distribution channels to be used, outlet, locations, and methods of transportation". According to Evans & Berman (1994, 37) distribution decisions include determining whether to sell via intermediaries or directly to consumers, how many outlets to sell through, whether to control or cooperate with other channel members, what purchasing terms to negotiate, supplier selection, what functions to assign to others".

#### 2.2.3.4 Promotion

Promotion refers to the motivational methods of obtaining the consumer to purchase the product. It can also be referred to as "any communication used to inform, persuade, and/or remind people about an organization's or individual's goods, services, image, ideas, community involvement, or impact on society" (Evans & Berman 1994, 574).

#### 2.2.4 Marketing communication in B2B

In the line of business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-customer (B2C), the concept of marketing communications is not the same but there are some exceptions. There are also significant differences between these two marketing dimensions. It is appropriate to have a proper and specific marketing dimension and its area of specialization in order to have the right dimension at the right place. (Pelsmacker, Geuens and Berg, 2004, 519)

In general the business-to-customer marketing communication tools are less important in business-to-business marketing communication tools. Commonly used business-to-customer marketing communication tools are advertisement and sales promotions which some companies consider less important tools but then these tools are very important in business-to-business. On the contrary, business-to-business markets place some importance on marketing communications tools which emphasize more trade shows, and increasingly direct mail. (Pelsmacker et al 2004, 519)

### 2.2.5 Marketing communications mix

According to Fill (1999, 3) “marketing communication can be used to differentiate products and services, remind and reassure the customer and potential customers, inform and persuade consumers to think or act in a particular way”. The marketing communications mix is sometimes referred to as the promotional mix. It is essential to aware of that all the marketing communication mixes’ are inter-related between each other. A poor quality product or service generally conveys more to the user than advertising. The marketers should employ the proper communication tools from the integrated perspective. (Smith & Taylor 2002, 7-9)

In the business field, the main communication objectives are to understand the desire of the target group audience, generate awareness, attitudes, interest or trial. One of the most important objectives in business is a solution provider who fully understands client needs and is easily able to provide complete and successful solutions. (Smith & Taylor 2002, 43-45) According to Dagmar in the book of Smith & Taylor (2002, 42) defining “advertising goals for measuring advertising response and AIDA /attention, interest, desire and action” provide yardsticks for communications objectives by trying to separate the various mental stages a buyer goes through before buying” .

The marketing communication mix (MCM) consists of various promotion tools as shown in table 2 below;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising</li> <li>• public relation</li> <li>• personnel selling</li> <li>• direct marketing</li> <li>• E-Marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word-of-mouth</li> <li>• Internet</li> <li>• Sponsorship</li> <li>• Trade promotion</li> <li>• Media Advertising</li> </ul>
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Table 2: Promotional tools of MCM

(Source: Smith & Taylor 2002)

#### 2.2.5.1 Advertising

Belch & Belch (2004, 16) define advertising as “any paid form of non-personnel communication about an organization, product, service, or idea by an identified sponsor”. The term “paid” reflects the fact that marketers need a specific space and time for an advertising mes-

sage which generally must be bought. In addition, the term “non-personal” indicates that advertising involves mass media that can transmit the message to a large number of individuals. There are no immediate feedbacks for non-personnel advertising. For this reason, the marketer should concentrate and discover how the audience will interpret and respond to the messages whenever they are sent. (Belch & Belch 2004, 16)

A clear strategy is the most essential part of advertising, before the creation of the effective marketing advertising, it is compulsory to set clear objectives for the marketing and communication. A clear objective is not possible without clearly defining the direction and target of a company. Establishing clear objectives gives the necessary focus to the organization. (Smith & Taylor 2002, 303)

On the page explains three strategies combined together, forming the hierarchy of effects model, message strategies, and advertising components. (Clow & Baack 2007, 204)

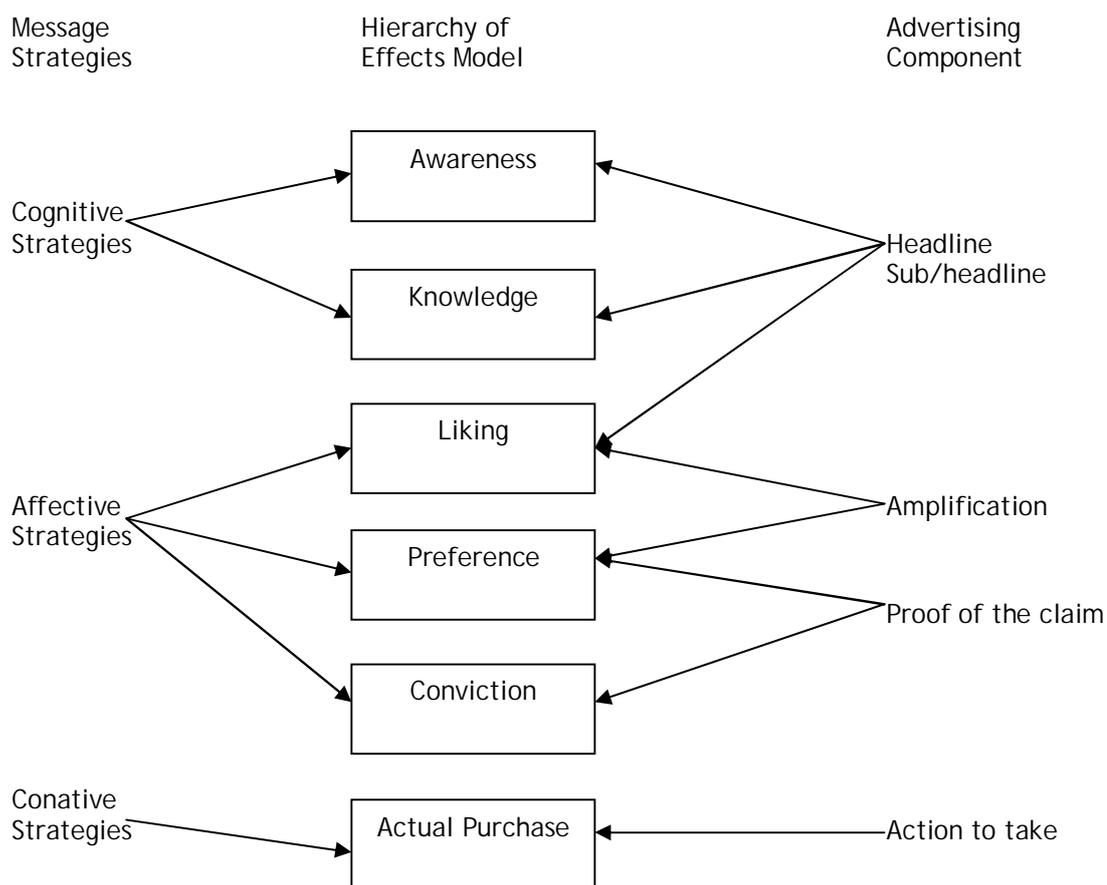


Figure 5: Hierarchy components (effects model/strategies & advertising  
(Source: Clow & Baack 2007)

The main objective of a marketing communication program is to design messages that effectively reach the target group. The marketing messages deliver in two directions; first, a personnel message can be delivered through a personal medium. In this case, the message transfer is communicated between final customers and the seller such as a sales representative sale the product and service, shaking the hand of the buyer, and smiling while talking is delivering a message in an intimate. The second way of marketing messages deliver is through the various forms of advertising media. These are television advertising, radio advertising and a computer screen. (Clow & Baack 2007, 198)

There are three different message strategies and each strategy may be used to help convince the consumer to make a purchase. These three strategies are cognitive strategies, affective strategies and conative strategies. (Clow & Baack 2007, 198)

According to Clow & Baack (2007, 199) a cognitive message strategy is the "presentation of rational arguments or pieces of information to consumers". Affective message strategies "invoke feelings or emotions and match those feelings with the good, service, or company. Such advertisements are prepared to enhance the liability of the product or service". (Clow & Baack 2007, 202) They continued by saying that "Action-inducing cognitive advertisements create a situation in which cognitive knowledge of the product or affective liking of the product may come later or during product usage". (Clow & Baack 2007, 204)

#### 2.2.5.2 Public relations

According to Smith & Taylor (2002, 416) Public relation is "the development and maintenance of good relationships with different publics. The publics are the range of different groups on which an organization is dependent. These include; employees, investors, suppliers, customers, distributors, legislators / regulators / governments, pressure groups, the community, the media and even competition".

In a company the public relations department is responsible for maintaining a good relationship with its clients and customers and at the same time makes a plan and a sustains effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. (Smith & Taylor 2002, 416)

In Smith & Taylor' (2002, 417) book a reference was made to Dr Jon White (1991), titled 'How to manage and understand public relations' who suggests that: "public relations is a complement and a corrective to the marketing approach... it creates an environment in which it is easier to market... public relations can raise questions which the marketing approach, with its focus on the market, products, distribution channels and customers, and its orientation towards growth and consumption, cannot. Public relations concerns are with relations of

one group to another, and with the interplay of conflicting and competing interests in social relationships” .

Public relations activities include publicity, corporate advertising, seminars, publications, lobbying and charitable donations and that publicity is a major element of public relations. It can be defined as the communication about a product to an organization by news. (Jobber & Fahy 2003, 204)

### 2.2.5.3 Personal selling

Personal selling is defined as “personal presentation by the firm’s sales force for the purpose of making sales and building customer relationships” . (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004, 467) Personal selling is one of the most effective and convenient ways to make a personal relationship with clients and customers. A good personal relationship makes an effective selling and buying platform between seller and buyers. The selling process involves the interaction between two or more people within a company or organizations. In the process of selling each party has his/her own interactions and demand in certain sectors and at the same time both parties have the opportunities to observe the other’s needs and characteristics and make quick corresponding adjustments. (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 487-488)

Selling is one of the oldest professions in the world. There are various organizational positions are associated with sales activities such as salespersons, sales representatives, account executives, sales consultants, sales engineers, agents, district managers, and account developments representatives. The above designations are all related with personal selling. Personal selling is usually realized by a salesperson- “an individual acting for a company by performing one or more of the following activities: prospecting, communicating, servicing, and information gathering” . (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 487)

Personal selling is the interpersonal section of the promotion mix and is one of the most effective ways to do better sales volume which is better compared to advertising. Advertising consists of one-way, non personal communication with target groups where personal selling involves and there are two ways of personal communication between salespeople and the individual customer, and the communication can be made face-to-face, by telephone, through video or web conferences. Personal selling is a way to communicate with customer groups that helps the customer to give feedback about the service and product, which are extra benefits for both parties. Another important benefit for personal selling is that the salespeople can examine the customers to learn more about their problems, and then adjust the market. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006, 487-488)

In the line of personal selling the salesforce serving as a critical link between company and customers, the salespersons representing his/her company to their customers, trying to find and develop new customers for the company, try keep in touch with customers, reading the customer's psychology, and serving customer's demands. Other aspects are listening more to customers, giving full effort to customers and communicating with them as individuals. The salespersons act inside the firm as middlemen or representatives of customers and try to concentrates on the customer's demands to the high officials and make good relationships between buyer and seller. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006, 488)

Salesforce management is also considered one of the most important parts of company, since their professional approach is important to the success of personal selling. Therefore, the organization should have a good management to manage the salesforce actively. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2006, 487) salesforce management can be defined as "the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of sales force activities. It includes setting and designing sales force strategy; and recruiting, selecting, training, supervising, compensating, and evaluating the firm's salespeople".

Below are shown the major sales force management decisions in a chart: (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006, 489)

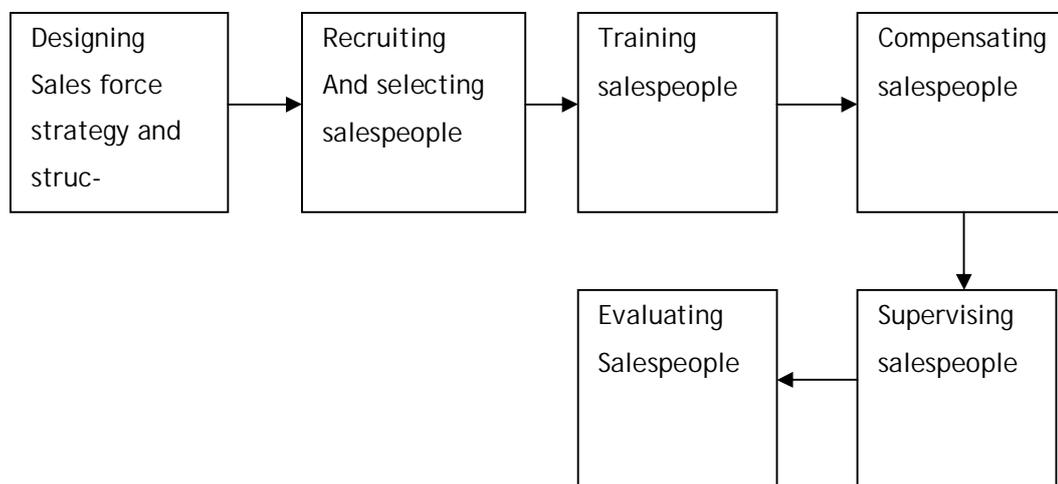


Figure 6: Major stages in sales force management  
(Source: Kotler & Armstrong, 2006, 489)

#### 2.2.5.4 Sales promotion

Sales promotion is a big part of a company's business activities; it is considered to be bigger than advertising for all business in the world. There are many factors that are involved with

sales promotion such as possibilities to develop a good relationship with customers and sellers, possibilities to offer a special promotion program to the loyal customers, offering club members' benefits to customers from the company. This is related to the growth of a certain quantity of customers who want to bid for sales promotion for a certain amount of products. (Smith & Taylor 2002, 338)

According to Smith & Taylor (2002, 338) sales promotion "is a below-the-line activity that can be used externally with end-users (Customer), and intermediaries (Trade distributors), and also internally with an organization's own sales force). (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006, 469) defined "sales promotion is "short-term incentives to encourage the purchase or sales of a product or service".

Sales promotions, premiums, incentives and motivation schemes are used for both products and services in consumer, business-to-business and industrial markets. Meanwhile there are four main categories of sales promotion which include; consumer promotion, trade promotion, retail promotion and salesforce promotion. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006, 469-470) Consumer-oriented sales promotion is one of the major tools which are used in sales promotion very commonly. Consumers are the buyers who are the end-users for a product and have the right to decide whether the product offered is good or not. There are several tools included with consumer promotion such as cash refunds for a certain amount of goods purchased, giving premiums to customers for an incentive to buy a product, advertising specialties. Also patronage rewards can be offered for using certain goods for regular purchases, giving of certificate(s) after purchases. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006, 470)

Trade-oriented tools of sales promotion are designed only for retailers and wholesalers to consumers. It motivates retailers, and wholesalers to introduce the product to the market and end-users. The manufacturer can give some extra effort to its retailers and wholesalers by advertising, arranging trade shows and by offering an advertising campaign. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006, 473) Business-oriented sales promotions are designed for industrial customers, and sales-promotion tools are used to generate business performance, stimulate purchase, reward customers and motivate salespeople. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006, 473)

#### 2.2.5.5 Direct marketing

Direct marketing is often characterized as a recent addition to the marketing communication mix. It is one of the easiest and convenient ways to reach the final customers and sell the goods according customers' demands. Direct marketing means to have a direct customer who is a good potential for a company rather than the mass market. (Egan 2007, 289-290)

According to Egan (2007, 290) quoting from "The UK Direct Marketing Association (DMA) book", he describes direct marketing as "an interactive system of marketing which uses one or more advertising media to affect a measurable response and/or transaction in any location".

Direct marketing has established itself as a major component of the promotional mix. In an advertising campaign there is a target group and for that reason there are also possibilities whereby a huge customer group of people might not be reached or some of the customers might not be included in the advertising target. Therefore direct marketing uses such media that can more precisely target consumers and request an immediate and direct response. Nowadays, there are several media used in direct marketing such as telemarketing, direct response advertising, internet, and online marketing to interact with people. Direct marketing helps the company to attract potential customers without using any intermediaries. It also helps to create a good relationship between the company, sellers and consumers. (Jobber & Fahy, 2003, 194)

In general, to attract a new customer is five times as costly as retaining existing customers. Once a customer is acquired there are possibilities to sell other existing goods to the same customer from the company. The tools involved in the use of direct marketing to obtain new customers and promote existing customers include; direct mail, telemarketing, coupon response, catalogue marketing, internet, e-mail, interactive cable TV, door-to-door leafleting. (Jobber & Fahy, 2003, 194)

Figure 7 below shows typical information that is recorded on a database.

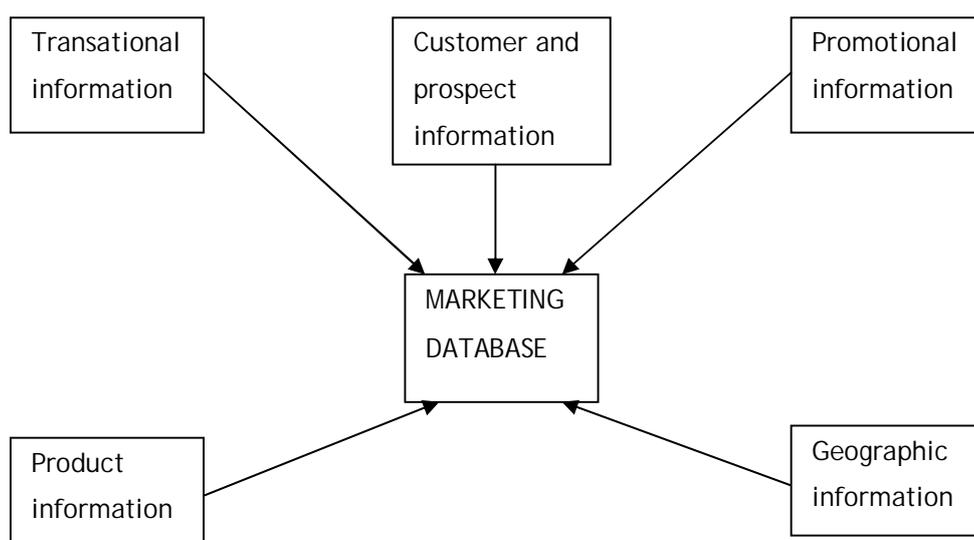


Figure 7: A Marketing database

(Source: Jobber & Fahy, 2003, 194)

Direct marketing requires a good database, which comes as a correlation of the communication mix with database technology and the power of the Internet. Database marketing is full of information about customers, where a company has the opportunities to address its customers, how to use a proper marketing media and channels, provide information to a target group, possibilities to contact to the customers and changing information, recoding and storing an electronic database. (Jobber & Fahy, 2003, 194)

#### 2.2.5.6 E-Marketing

The Internet is a networking tool that connects people with different stakeholders, it can serve also as a marketing tool; connecting members of one company to another; as an outsourcing channel for companies etc. E-marketing is a huge opportunities of connecting networks and providing information to the right person by an interested sector. With the creation of the World Wide Web and web browsers, the internet becomes a major communication tool between a company and clients and buyers. The new technology has shown thousands of entrepreneurs to launch internet-based companies which are very reliable, time consuming, less costly. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006, 553-554)

E-business involves the use of electronic platforms such as internet display advertising, e-mail marketing internet-to conduct a company's business. E-marketing is one of the most important tools of e-business; the majority of e-business experts define that e-marketing is the core of e-business. E-marketing is marketing online and being keep in touch with customers, forming relationships with them and keeping them satisfied online. The benefits of e-marketing can include quick contact with customers, easy to obtain feedback about the goods and services, collect information about customers' habits and interest, and extra added value online. (Smith & Taylor 2002, 579-580)

Kotler & Armstrong (2006, 555) define e-marketing as "the marketing side of e-commerce-company efforts to communicate about, promote, and sell products and services over the internet". Nowadays, almost every company has set up a web site to inform, promote its products and services to its potential customers. The main purpose of building a webpage is to communicate with interested customers in a very easy way and make good relationships with clients and customers. E-commerce is electronic-based information exchange within or between companies and customers, but e-marketing only focuses on supporting in buying and selling goods through the internet. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006, 554-554)

#### 2.2.5.7 Word-of-mouth

Products and services are often a source of conversation. Every company has its own staff or salespeople who are responsible to discuss and inform about a product to customers. When company representatives talk about the organization, their products and services, they are giving their word-of-mouth service to its customers. Nowadays, company representatives are doing more of the marketing communications, including campaigns, editorial stories, publicity and special offers. (Smith & Taylor 2002, 555-556)

Communication tools themselves can be used to generate word-of-mouth. There are many devices and techniques that are interconnected and accelerate the word-of-mouth process, such as post cards, digital postcards and t-shirts, always bearing a message to the customers about a product and service offered by a company. There are also possibilities and opportunities to accelerate the word-of-mouth thorough the internet such as networks of news groups, chat rooms, discussion forums and viral marketing. Personal word-of-mouth is also important in marketing communication tools but in this word-of-mouth section the importance of listening to the audience, understanding the business high official's opinion and opinion formers and the overall audience is high. (Smith & Taylor 2002, 555-557)

In consequence of marketing communications, the marketing manager's expectation is to receive a very good impression, good comments of the product from the customers which are offered by the company. In the second stage of marketing communications, the manager wants to hear all the bad comments about the products. An individual is the most important obligator in word-of-mouth marketing communication tools; an individual makes direct experience comments about an organization's products or services. So the levels of customer care and quality of customer service also have an impact on word-of-mouth marketing communication tools. (Smith & Taylor 2002, 555-557)

#### 2.2.5.8 Sponsorship

Sponsorship is more than patronage or investment. It helps the company to achieve a specific customer's attention about the company. There are many reasons to take part in sponsorship. Some sponsors define sponsorship as a form of enlightened self-interest, which involves a huge cash to invest and considered in return for satisfying specific marketing or corporate objectives. Sponsorship is a promotional tool where the target audience must be reached in detail, clear qualitative and quantitative objective must be set, and at the same time appropriate sponsorship programs must be set beforehand and agreed how they should be achieved. (Smith & Taylor 2002, 451-453)

All sectors of society can be targeted and reached through sponsorship and anyone or anything can be sponsored such as television programmes, football teams, any sports teams and players. "The range of sponsorship opportunities is limited only by one's imagination". Obvious areas are sport, arts, education, community and broadcast. There is no limitation whether the events are large or small as sports offer an effective route into the different target markets and audience. (Smith & Taylor 2002, 452)

The advantages and disadvantages of sponsorship are numerous, but the advantages are more than disadvantages. Sponsorship can be cost-effective in terms of reaching a particular audience. There are also opportunities to target a certain group of an audience and at the same time set different target objectives including increased awareness, image enhancement, and improved relationships with many different publics, increased sales, sampling and database building, creating a platform for new promotional materials and advertising bans. (Smith & Taylor 2002, 455)

#### 2.2.5.9 Trade promotion & conference

Trade shows and conferences usually refer to a short term sales promotion. Generally, these types of events help the company to make an image to other companies who are participating in the same trade show and conference. A trade show brings awareness to a similar company which is operating in the same market place. Attendance at industry trade shows is expected of any serious participation in the market segment. This is useful also for smaller companies as it creates the opportunity for them to show their service, product and business activities to other big companies. It is also difficult to decide which trade shows to attend and which will be beneficial for the company. In this case many large shows are normally divided into regional shows, lowering travel expenses, making it possible for more people to attend. (Vitale & Giglierano, 2002, 439-440)

The main reason to participant in a trade show is to make a direct contact with various companies, making a good relationship with customers as there are huge amount peoples are visiting trade shows. If the trade shows emphasizes the marketer's customer trade shows, then the marketer has to be present and generate people opinions as support and commitment to the customers. Having exhibited at the customer's trade shows provides an opportunity to identify and start a relationship with customers. (Vitale & Giglierano, 2002, 439-440)

The trade show is not an entertainment for marketing and sales staff but it is an opportunity to educate members of the company about the business. This includes supporting staff to learn the business operation, knowing similar business activities and generate experience of marketing and sales promotion. All the staff from the company should have an individual plan

of attendance and that includes learning as much as possible about what impacts their role in the organization. (Vitale & Giglierano, 2002, 439-442)

#### 2.2.5.10 Media advertising

Media is a marketing tool which is popular and an attractive way of establishing marketing communication. The planning process of media advertising is not easy but once the process is set then the target of the advertisement can be achieved very quickly. There are many options in media advertisement such as television, radio, magazines and out from home media such as outdoor advertising, transit advertising, and electronic billboards. Among all of them, TV advertising is the most popular, straightforward and convenient for advertising. Therefore the selection of the media becomes as involved as the nature of the media themselves. (Belch & Belch, 2001, 304-305)

Media advertising involves a series of decisions and processes including delivering the promotional message to the prospective purchasers and/or users of the product or brand. In addition, it requires development of specific media objectives and specific media strategies designed to attain these objectives. (Belch & Belch, 2001, 304-305)

#### 2.2.6 Integrated marketing communications

According to Kotler & Armstrong, (2004, 469) Integrated marketing communications (IMC) is "the concept under which a company carefully integrates and coordinates its many communications channels to deliver a clear, consistent, and compelling message about the organization and its products". Under this marketing communication discipline, a company integrates and coordinates its various channels in order to present a clear message to its existing and target customers. In addition, a company tries to focus marketing programs designed to build closer relationships with customers in more narrowly defined micro-markets. In other words, for example constant imagery used in advertising and direct mailing may increase the total awareness of the product and service offering. Direct mail and constant imagery communication approach leads to a situation where consumers have more possibilities to become aware of the offering which may lead to a purchase. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 467-69)

The integrated marketing communications approach is well appreciated by 21<sup>st</sup> century marketing professionals. In the process of integrated marketing communications, marketing professionals have developed effective mass-media advertising techniques to support their mass-marketing strategies. During the past several decades, in order to success of these strategies, most of the companies were investing millions of dollars in the mass-media and reaching millions of customers in a minute. The demands of business-to-business markets have changed

from mass-marketing to targeted marketing; therefore the markets have become fragmented. The change from mass-marketing to segmented marketing has had a remarkable impact on marketing communications. The use of precise marketing communication tools for a specific segment can be referred to media concepts where a company is able to target its customer with a specific objective. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 467-475)

A company's total marketing communications mix is also called its promotion mix. It consists of the specific join of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and direct marketing tools that the company uses to practicing its advertising objectives. Competitive markets demand a more customized approach in tailoring the products and services to suit the clients' requirements. The main purpose of total marketing communications mix is to make a correlation with the target group with specific objectives. Since the communication channels that reach specific market segments are great in variety, it is a big challenge for companies to satisfy and communicate their offering as clearly as possible. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 469)

### 2.3 Previous studies

The topic of developing marketing communication and improving customer services has been the theme for many undergraduate and master's thesis. There are many similarities in the theoretical section with this thesis and previously studied thesis's. The main difference with this thesis and others is the case companies and the level of research. Below are some describe theses and main areas which are related with to thesis and containing a similar output.

Pursiainen, E. 2005. Developing marketing communications and increasing the level of awareness. Bachelor thesis. The objective of this thesis was to discover ways to improve the marketing communications and to increase the level of awareness of the Finnish institute in Madrid and concentrate on investigating the views and opinions of the target persons of the institutes. The research examined opinions on marketing communications defined according to the Finnish institute's areas of promotion. The result concluded that the institute has areas of development both in its marketing communications and awareness. Among others electronic communications, renewal and diversification and more efficient consolidation could develop the communication between the institutes and their external audiences.

Seppälä, K. 2006. Developing business-to-business relationships and services. Bachelor thesis. This thesis discussed the current utility and satisfaction level of Nordea's business-to-business customer products and services which are offered to the target group. Therefore the main objective was to discover development ideas to improve the customer relationships and develop financial services for Nordea's business-to-business customers, especially for small and

medium-sized companies. The study of the thesis resulted that, the target customers are satisfied with the service of Nordea bank but at the same time it has been recommended that the customer care should be developed and arrange some meeting with the customers face-to-face.

Asikainen, T. 2004. Business-to-business Marketing Communications. Bachelor thesis. The main purpose of this thesis was to investigate whether there is a correlation between the nationalities and respondents in English speaking countries, and to measure the successfulness of the case company in its business-to-business marketing communications. The research concerned the frequency of the key accounts follow-up and participation in areas of business-to-business marketing communications. It was concluded that the case company was successful in each area of business-to-business marketing communications.

Heikkinen, I. 2007. Developing the marketing communications of a financing company. Bachelor thesis. The objective of this thesis was to develop the marketing communications of the case company from the perspective of financial services by analyzing the current tools used in marketing communication. The research discovered that the awareness of a company providing financing has an effect on the conducted communications; especially sales promotions combined with effective advertising and personal selling are the basis for continuous and durable growth.

## 2.4 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study shown earlier was divided into two sections. The first section concentrates on customer service while the second section focuses on the marketing and marketing communication tools. The theoretical section shortly summarized the theories used in this research. This theoretical section consists of two main theoretical entities, presented in figure 8. These two parts are services and marketing. The service section individually consist of six different sections and they are characteristics of services, customer services, and development of customer services, business-to-business customer relationship, extended marketing mix and marketing communication in the service marketing context.

In the second section of the theoretical section concentrates on marketing, which also consists of six different sections and these are business-to-business marketing, company and marketing strategy, marketing mix, integrated marketing strategy, marketing communication in business-to-business and marketing communications mix. The service section of the theoretical section discusses the importance of customer satisfactions and follow-up service in business-to-business customer relationship. The figure 8 on next page shows the theoretical framework of this study.



Figure 8: Theoretical framework of the study

The theoretical entity of marketing and marketing communication provides the main basis for marketing communication for this study, which includes the company and marketing strategy, four p's, theory and implementation related matters, marketing communication in business-to-business and its relation to the communication mix. The most integrated communication mix functions such as advertising, public relation, personal selling, sales promotion, sponsorship, word-of-mouth, direct marketing, trade show, media advertising, e-marketing.

### 3 Methodology of the study

This section is formed as the overall research strategy of the study and explains how the research and data collection methods were selected. It also focuses on a clear view of the methodology of the study, in theory and in practice. The reliability and validity of the study was also evaluated at the end of this section.

#### 3.1 Research approach

The basic purpose of the research is to analyze the situation where a decision needs to be taken for future action and business operations of a company as well as whether it is appropriate to reorganize its structure or to merge or take over another company. It is not possible to take decisions on important issues unless investigations are prepared more deeply to receive the relevant information, and gather more information on the particular aspect of interest. The main purpose of analyzing all this information is to make a judgment about the right solution in answer to any questions that will arise. (Ghuri & Gronhaug, 2005, 8)

According to McDaniel and Gates (2004, 5), "marketing research is the planning, collection, and analysis of data relevant to marketing decision making and the communication, and the communication of the results of this analysis to management".

There are two major research approaches (methods) used in research works and these are the qualitative and the quantitative research approach. Qualitative researches are a mixture of the rational, explorative and intuitive, where the skills and experience of the researcher play an important role in the analysis of data. This method is applied to gain constructive insights and a better understanding of a phenomenon. The main techniques of gathering information in qualitative research are by personal interviews and observations. The quantitative research approach emphasis on testing and verification which focus on facts and/or reasons for social events and it is result oriented. The main way of collecting quantitative data is by questionnaire. (Ghuri & Gronhaug, 2005, 108-110).

In this research study, both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been employed. This is because the research included a case study (company) and had the possibilities of contact with the company's top management as well as with the clients. Another reason for choosing this mixed-method approach was to enhance the reliability and validity of the thesis as a whole. The quantitative research approach was chosen because the study is more descriptive and offers a platform to examine, contrast and emphasize understanding. At the same time, the qualitative research approach has been chosen because of the verification and testing the result of the company and control measurement from different perspectives.

### 3.2 Selection of the target group

The selection of the target group was mainly done by using the customer and client profile of the case company in Russia, which includes complete information about clients, customers and their business operational area. The database is a complete profile of clients which can be used for official purposes and research purposes only.

### 3.3 Sampling

“Sampling is the process of obtaining information from a subset of a larger group. A user of marketing research then takes the results from the sample and makes estimates of the characteristics of the larger group”. A census is a “collection of data obtained from or about every member of the population of interest. Censuses are seldom employed in marketing research, as populations of interest to marketers normally include to collect data from a population of this magnitude are so great that censuses are usually out of the questions”. (McDaniel & Gates 2002, 396-397)

To obtain an accurate result from the qualitative data collection method a census was chosen for the research, even though censuses require high costs and time. In this research census was chosen because the case company has its own customer profile with specific contact information via electronic mail. In addition, OLDI has its own mailing systems which always updated with modern electronic mailing systems. To receive all the information correct and to avoid false information from the target group for this research, the questionnaire was sent directly to the clients, which made the research as accurate as possible.

### 3.4 Data collection method

As mentioned earlier, the two major research approaches of quantitative and qualitative were used in conducting the study. The primary data of this research was collected through interviews and to make it easier, the interview was structured in semi-structured questionnaire form. The quantitative data collection questionnaire was designed for a target group in Russia, as the case company is located in the capital city of the Russian federation, in Moscow.

#### 3.4.1 Quantitative method

The quantitative data collection was completed with a questionnaire (see Appendix 1 and 2) in two different languages, English and Russian due to the company's location. The questionnaire was distributed to the target group by using the company's data e-mail address for clients. The first draft of the questionnaire was sent to the target group in February 2009 but

as responses were not forthcoming, there was a need to resend and this was done in April. Moreover, some of the questionnaires were given to the client through direct contact during some meetings with clients. The total number of questionnaires distributed to the clients was 67.

There were four different parts of the questionnaire designed, and these include the demography information of respondents, the customer service satisfaction level of the case company, the understanding of respondents about marketing communication tools. The final part therefore concentrates on the marketing communication tools and strategy which is used by the company. The first draft of the questionnaire sent in February had not received responses from the target group due to its structure. The challenge was due to the fact that it was structured in Word document format and therefore was difficult to respond through a computer as no return button was in use and this caused a need for the second draft which had a good percentage responds. The data of research area was mainly collected in Russian and assistance was sort to translate into English.

#### 3.4.1.1 Data analysis

According to McDaniel & Gates (2002, 479) "cross tabulations is the examination of the responses to one question relative to the response to one or more other questions" and correlation analysis measures "the degree to which changes in one variable in one variable are associated with changes in another" (McDaniel & Gates 2004, 372). Aker, Kumar and Day (2001, 431) determine cross-tabulations as "the appropriate statistical analysis technique for studying the relationships among and between nominal variables".

The results of the data were analyzed with the help of Microsoft Excel and creating tables and charts. In some context there have been used an average of numerical values as measurements of some data. Written explanations in the open questions section were analyzed by using the hypothesis method. Multiple choice questions were analyzed using Excel pie charts and bar charts. In addition, grouping of data and creation of data techniques helped the author to analyze the open-ended questions. The data and sample were divided into subgroups in order to learn how the dependent variable varies from subgroup to subgroup.

#### 3.4.2 Qualitative method

This section discussed the qualitative research method used in the study and several sources were employed including books, internet sources, especially the case company's web page, clients' companies' webpage, and case company's annual report.

The first interview was granted to Mr. Tamal Parvez, the president of Oy STN Electronics Ltd Finland and vice president of the case company. OY STN Electronics Ltd is a partner company of OLDI. The questionnaire concentrated on the present market situation of the case company (OLDI) in Russia and the marketing communication strategy used by OLDI currently and what strategy can be used in the near future. To gather future information about the company and research areas of this thesis, there was an opportunity to visit the head office of the case company in Moscow, Russia. There an interview was granted for the manager of the sales department, Mr. Remiss, and the director of the marketing department, Ms. Katherine.

The other interviews were granted to some of the clients of the company during the visit to Moscow, and there was more possibility of gathering information about the current customer service and marketing communication tools used by the company. The main purposes of these interviews were to generate customer views and analyze the current satisfaction level of the company in the competitive situation in the same line of business.

Beside the interviews, the visit gave the opportunity for observations and this was purposeful as it helped to investigate the theoretical background related to business-to-business marketing, business-to-business customer services and used marketing communication tools in the case company in Moscow, Russia. Moreover most information was collected from internet sources as well. These focus areas such as the company's general information, line of business operations, and specialization, as well as the offer for clients, dealers and retail sellers. The internet sources are a combination of the case company's own webpage and PDF files and news letter.

### 3.5 Reliability of the research

According to McDaniel & Gates, (2004, 200) reliability "is the degree to which measures are free from random error and, therefore, provide consistent data". The measurement of the reliability is, if a research has the ability to provide non-accidental results. (McDaniel & Gates, 2004, 199)

Factors to decrease the reliability level of the research study were considered and therefore can be proved to be satisfactory as a response rate from the target group was also satisfactory and measurable. The 67 stakeholders as the target group, 39 members responded and this considered efficiently enough.

Even though the responses rate was satisfactory, much of the concentration was on the qualitative research method of the data collection methods. Even though the 39 responses are considered satisfactory, it could have been more if not for the reason of the financial crisis

which has affected a lot of companies causing reduction in production, clients and for that matter sale.

### 3.6 Validity of the research

According to McDaniel & Gates, (2004, 202) validity is “the degree to which what was being measured was actually measured”. The validity of this research is appreciative, with the reason been that; the questionnaire was designed with the vice president and marketing director of the company, was scrutinized and approved by the thesis supervisor.

The translation of the questionnaire to Russian language was carefully done by Mr. Sergey Kolokolov a boardmember and director of the OY STN Electronics Ltd, Finland. Mr. Kolokolov is having Russian language as the mother tongue, and has had work experience in Russian embassies in many countries. To ensure it proper design of and perfect setting, the questionnaire was approved by the marketing director of the company before it sent to the respondents. The main objective of the questionnaire was to find out the satisfaction level of the customer service and to understand this level and evaluation by the case company. One section of the questionnaire was to find out about the general information of the company such as; the marketing communication tools. The main reason was to measure the understanding of the target group about marketing and communication tools.

## 4 Empirical Study- OLDI, Russia

### 4.1 Introduction of the company

OLDI is one of the leading IT Companies in Russia and is an authorized distributor of world’s leading brand computer manufacturing companies such as, HP, Canon, Xerox, Samsung, Sony and so many more. The company was founded in 1992, and in its sixteen years of existing with experience of the IT Business to satisfied partners, potential customers and consumer. It has over 2000 qualified staff to support its business operations in the Russian federation region. OLDI operates its business in many different ways, such as retail selling, distribution, dealership, own selling store in the business operational region and company own online shop as well. In the line of electronics business, the network partners OLDI has more than 3,500 regional customers including retailer and dealer. (OLDI 2009)

As mentioned earlier, OLDI business channels are divided into three different categories, the main customer group is the dealers and retailers. At the same time OLDI owns a computer supermarket with 200 shops sited in Moscow and some big cities in Russia, also there is an online shop which gives more value to the company and contributes in the earnings revenue.

OLDI's target market is only in Russia and the main distribution channel is retailers. As OLDI has a good image in Russia and it has a big market share as well, vast experience in the IT business by satisfying its customers within this sixteen year period. During the interview what was realized was that OLDI's current market position within 1 - 5 among all competitors. Using the BCG (Boston consulting group) growth share matrix analysis, the result can help to identify that OLDI has three business operational and selling channels, and these three sale channels are the key source of money earnings. Among these three sales operations, retail sells is the most important part of the selling functions and major source of money coming in. according to annual report 2008, last year an average of 70 percent income was accrued from the retail selling stand. (OLDI's Annual Report 2008)

#### 4.2 OLDI group organization

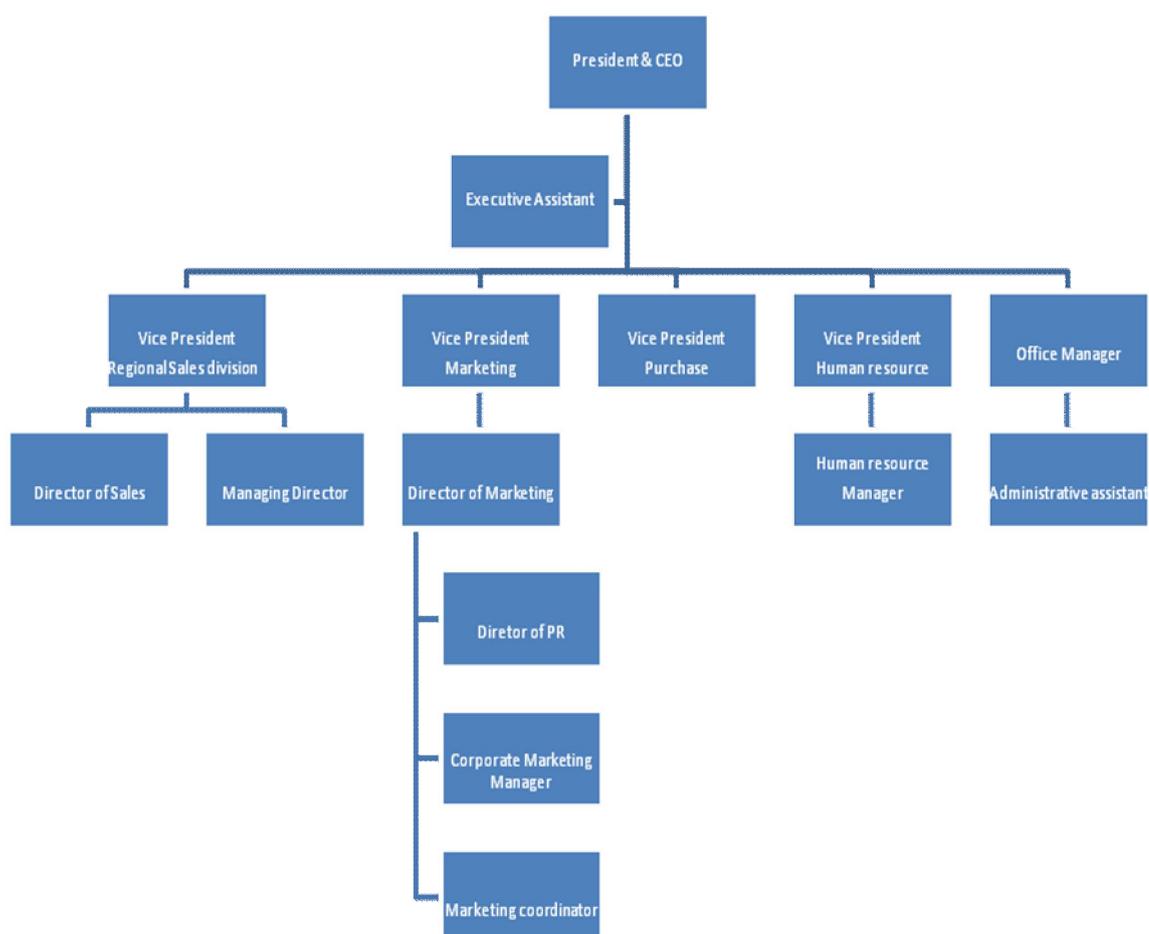


Figure 9: OLDI's organizational chart

#### 4.3 OLDI's SWOT analysis

Based on the interview with the vice president of regional sales division, Mr. Tamal Parvez, and director of marketing, Ms. Dvoryanskova, table 3 below is constructed to present the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the case company OLDI. This section is a useful tool in measuring and summarizing the current situation of the case company in its market and as evaluation strategic options. This is an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses present internally in the organization, coupled with the opportunities and threats that the organization faces externally.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Strong brand name</li> <li>-Strong market presence</li> <li>-A high standard business policy</li> <li>-Highly competent sales staffs</li> <li>-Innovative business model</li> <li>-standard customer service</li> <li>-communication tools practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Share weakness</li> <li>-Uncertain financial situation</li> <li>-Poor cash flow</li> <li>-Few core strengths</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Market growth</li> <li>-International growth</li> <li>-New takeovers</li> <li>-New partnership opportunities</li> <li>-New markets</li> <li>-New segments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increased competition</li> <li>-Change in political environment</li> <li>-Change in economical environment</li> <li>-New international barriers to trade</li> </ul>

Table 3: OLDI's SWOT analysis

#### 4.4 OLDI B2B customer services

OLDI is one of the leading IT companies in Russia, and with a large market share, has three business operation areas; OLDI-Retail, OLDI-Computer supermarket and OLDI-Web Shop. OLDI has been working with its retail customers since the launching of the business in 1992. Nowadays, it has over three thousand dealers throughout Russia who support their customers in

every aspect of business activities. Also many services have been introduced during the long business partnership with various clients with OLDI. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.4.1 Wide product range

OLDI's strong business background is situating on the foundation of a wide product range in the supply of electronics equipment. As OLDI has a good partnership and dealership with maximum of the electronics and computer manufacturers companies all over the Russian federation, it has given opportunities to its dealers and clients to gain the benefit of collecting a wide range of product deliveries for their final customers. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.4.2 Flexible financial terms

Financial terms are one of the most important factors that influence enormously in a long-term business relationship. OLDI always has a flexible financial provision for its customers such as long-term payments method, long-term credit line, and different installments payment method. There are also some flexible offers for the customers such as 60 days 2%, this means if any customer can pay within 60 days then they will receive two percent discount from the total payment. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.4.3 Information and technical support

Information as a concept has a diversity of meanings, but in the line of OLDI's business operation, information is given to its customers about the market situation and the new innovation of technology including upcoming invention to the electronics market. This is the information which conveys important messages and plays a vital role in business operations. This is because without proper information of the market and technology the retail customers cannot be in a proper position to inform the final consumers about a product. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

The unified information service (call-center) of the OLDI group was established in the middle of 2005. The objective was to make the company more client-oriented in the Russian market. A call-center is the face-to-face of the company. Communication skills, patience and politeness are key qualifications for those working in this department. Every employee here has a clear understanding that personnel is the most valuable asset of the call-center. Almost all of them hold masters degrees and have passed necessary training in telemarketing and telesales. Since October 2005, the call-center has been providing services to the OLDI internet shop.

OLDI's unified information service can be recognized as one of the best within its segment in Russia. (Annual report 2008)

Technical support is a range of service which is offered by OLDI to its customers with varieties technological products such as mobile telephones, televisions, computers or other electronics goods. The main objective of this service is to help the end-user and also help solve specific problems about his/her products. OLDI has one service which is by way of offering supporting training for its retail customers. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.4.4 Loyalty program

A loyalty program is a marketing tool which is very common and familiar in business-to-business operations, especially in retailing business. The program consists of different card issue systems to its numerous retail customers such as a loyalty card, reward card, points card, advantage card or club card. All these cards are part of the company's loyalty program. By issuing these kinds of cards, it encourages the customer group to purchase more and become a member of the loyalty program and both parties are benefited. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.4.5 Special offers

Every year there are some special offer periods for dealers and retail customers in certain products. Sometimes the offers include big discounts in a certain product range, sometimes the terms of payments are more flexible, and the delivery and product distribution are free. But the whole program or offers depends on the time and condition of the market and the special program's operational decisions are made by the OLDI's top management such as vice-president of the sales division, vice-president of the purchase division and marketing director.. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.4.6 Warehouse program

OLDI- distribution is a logistics center located in Russia and includes around 25000 sq.m and supplies products to 3500 regional dealers throughout the Russian market. OLDI has its own warehouse in every business operational area in Russia, which is a great benefit for its customers to receiving products and services very near to their business operation marketplace. The warehouse program is designed only to give support to the local retail customers to store the goods and products in a good condition and doing the delivery as fast as possible with good care of delivering. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.4.7 Delivery to all destinations

Doing business with retail customers in the electronics business, the delivery program to all destinations is one of the most important factors that needs to be taken into consideration. OLDI believes in delivery to all destinations according to the demand of customers and in making sure the supply is on time. To maintain a good logistics operation, OLDI has its own transportation facilities with more than 50 trucks including Lorries and small-medium size vans. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.4.8 Qualified personnel

OLDI believes that corporate culture is a powerful tool mobilizing everybody to achieve the common objective and in 2005 the company fulfilled its restructuring. To maintain a high level of employee qualification, the company organizes master-classes and training with the participation of representatives from suppliers and independent experts. Certificate no 02648 confirms that the company's quality management system complies with the requirements of GOST R ISO 9001-2001. (Annual report 2008)

#### 4.4.9 New technology sales

Modern technology is changing very rapidly and the demand for modern technology is high. It is the challenging work for a distributor to maintain the market up to date with modern technology. OLDI with its 16 years of business experience has tried to satisfy its customers to meet their demands by delivering new inventions in the technological sector. OLDI has always paid much attention to inform its retail customers about upcoming new products and made a plan with retailers to introduce into the market place. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.5 Marketing mix

The marketing theory related to the marketing mix can also recall from the marketing principles view and the marketing mix is the concept of the four Ps. These are product, price, place, and promotion. These are still the four Ps of marketing whether operating in a consumer or a business market. (Vitale & Giglierano, 2002, 5) The case company of this thesis OLDI has always given extra concentration to the marketing mix to promote the business operation and meeting the requirements of its clients and final consumers.

#### 4.5.1 Product

For OLDI, the product element is the most important part of the marketing mix, because OLDI always offers a complete solution to its customers. An example when it sells electronics products to its customer, OLDI takes full responsibility to fulfill the final consumers' requirements; this may include financing, delivery to the final destination all around Russia. At the same time OLDI concentrate on the collection of the right product for the right customers as well. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.5.2 Price

OLDI believes that price is a factor that needs mutual agreement upon an amount of money that satisfies both parties in the business operation sector. OLDI is always very careful with price coding and concentrates on the average pricing in the markets. There is also one important factor that affects pricing of distribution business, that if the amount of risk is high then the price level could be different. But when prices are negotiated together with the client and they are based on the type of purchasing volume and business relationships and of course the types of customers and payments methods also affect pricing. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.5.3 Place

Place is one of the important elements of the marketing mix for the case company OLDI. The core business of the case company is distribution of electronics and computer equipment, so from this point of view the warehouse program is a valuable tool in business operations. OLDI has its own offices in Moscow as well as some other cities in Russia; with its vast business operational market it has established big areas of logistics operational channels in the field of distribution. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.5.4 Promotion

Promotion is an important element for every product or service. OLDI has different communication tools to introduce its business operations and product and service as well. Every year the company has its own strategy to make some promotional activities that make their selling volume high and able to reach new customers and entering to a new market place in the operational process. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.6 Marketing communication practices

Marketing communications has been performed centrally in the business activity of OLDI acquiring new clients as well as doing business transactions with existing customers. OLDI has been operating its business more than 16 years in the Russian Federation, now this company has more than 3500 dealers and retail customers but still OLDI is looking for new customers to expand its business and take over the market share as high as possible in near future. To achieve the target market share and increase the sales volume of the company, the marketing communication practices are valuable in the business policy. This has been considered from the point of view of marketing communications and OLDI has been concentrated on its marketing strategy to practices and as well as all the communication tools that complete the business communication with clients and customers.

##### 4.6.1 Personal selling

In the electronic product distribution business, the personal selling marketing communication tool is one of the most important tools in business transactions according to the marketing director of OLDI; Ms. Dvoryanskova. OLDI do its principal selling activity by the use of marketing communication tools called personal selling since the start of its business. It has been able to create a good business relationship with its existing customers who are part of company's personal selling activities. On the other hand, sales employees' areas are a significant link between OLDI and the potential clients and have its own trained staff to manage potential clients in all possible situations. In the electronics business employees' knowledge about service, products knowledge and negotiation skills are important parts of the training programme. To train all the employees OLDI has introduced its own training institute in 2005, where all the employees need to obtain the required training to serving a better service for the company's clients. (Annual report, 2008)

##### 4.6.2 Communication via electronic mail

OLDI has its own customer data profiles where it keeps its customer information and uses data profiles in business activities. OLDI also has its own IT expert whose main responsibility is to build up a data center where they keep customer information and categorize the information on the basis of customer business behavior. To maintain a communication with clients, electronic mail is one of the most convenient media and it is faster to communicate as well. OLDI has such a strategy that helps it give up-to-date information about new products and upcoming goods and services to its clients which is an important part of marketing communication. These categories of information are very often sent by electronic mail. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.6.3 Web page

In recent years, Internet is the easiest and fastest way to connect with target stakeholders. OLDI has its own informative website which is organized with all information needed in business activities with OLDI, including information about products, price, warranty, and contact information, services for retail customers and dealers, as well as payments method. In addition, information is also available about the current market situation in the computer and electronics business. An additional important matter is also included among the webpage services as well, that is direct contact information including telephone number and electronic mail. These are the tools that make the customer relationship better and easier and faster to communicate with OLDI. (OLDI 2009)

#### 4.6.4 Seminars and conference

OLDI has its own conference and seminar space at the head office in Moscow, where every third month the company organizes one seminar with its clients. The core principle of the seminars is to listen to them, discuss the current situation of the market, what needs to be done in the near future, and the main expectations of clients. The one major aspect of these seminars is to maintain a good communication with retailers and receive their complaints and discover possible solutions for specific problems. In addition, every year OLDI also arranges a big conference about the company and its clients. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.6.5 Advertisements

The emphasis of OLDI advertising has been on public transportation, busses and billboards. There are many billboards around the city of Moscow and Saint Petersburg. These billboards contain OLDI's logo and some product pictures and descriptions. In addition, OLDI has also advertised in commercial newspapers and tabloids. These advertisements often contain specialized service offers by OLDI and separately mention the service for dealers, retailers and final consumers. One important issue is that behind the newspapers advertisements, direct contact with potential clients and consumers who act as shareholders and contribute to the company's turnover. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

In addition to printed advertising, billboard advertising has been utilized in OLDI's marketing communication. These billboards are located in various locations visible to target both travelers and all passer-by. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.6.6 Trade shows

The company organizes trade shows every year in and around the Russian region and among these trade shows some are related to the IT sector. OLDI targets only these IT-related trade shows to participate in and to introduce its products and services to both existing and would-be clients. In addition, OLDI believes that participating in such shows is not for attracting individual customers but also as a means to attract new corporate bodies and companies. It offers them at the same time the opportunity to introduce with their competitors. Another important objective is to help train employees of OLDI, where employees thereby have the possibility to acquire new ideas and knowledge about the market. Knowledge about a company's competitors is essential for its business operations. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.6.7 Public relations

For big companies it is vital to have good public relation in order to formulate new selling strategy and this helps in publicity as well. Nowadays, public relations are an indirect promotional tool which has a long-term targeting effect, and in particular enhances the company's image widely. This is also the way of targeting a good number of internal and external groups which may have an impact on the company. (Rope & Vahvaselkä 1998, 202)

Public relations (PR) are mainly conducted by OLDI's trade magazines and newspaper advertisements as well as TV advertisements. The other media for public relations are OLDI's own webpage and personal contact with clients. (Katherine & Remiss, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.6.8 Sales promotion

Sales promotion has been a significant tool for contacting potential clients from different industries. OLDI has been performing its sales promotion with the cooperation of retail customers at least twice every year. At times it has develop into a project of sales promotion whereby the retail customers play a major role, since they have direct contact with the final consumers. Electronics are category of products that are directly connected with technology and innovation. Also computer and electronic goods at times have certain validation date on them that requires their usage within a certain period of time and also a quantity of new high quality goods come supplement the old goods. Therefore to be up to date with the market, and also increase sales volume, there is a need to introduce new technology in the competitive market, of which sales promotion is the media. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.6.9 Media advertisement

The two basic tasks of marketing communications are message creation and message dissemination. There are plenty of media to use in advertising, but television is a visual advertisement media which manipulate to attract the young consumers as they are more influenced by what they see. OLDI therefore gives more emphasis to the media advertisement such as on Russian television and even on radio. In addition, OLDI has gone in with some slogan advertisements in this media during football matches, especially Russian football leagues. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

#### 4.6.10 Sponsorship

OLDI is officially the sponsored company for one of Russian's football team, which is very popular team with an attractive name of LOKOMOTIVE Moscow. OLDI believes that this is the way to also attract football spectators' as the possibility to introduce company's products and services to their target groups. LOKOMOTIVE was recently ranked position four within the whole of the Russian Federation in terms of football. This is an opportunity OLDI has taken to attract a large target audience. (Dvoryanskova & Mamedov, Interview 3 April 2009)

### 5 Analysis of the results

This section emphasizes the final analysis of the research findings.

#### 5.1 General information about the respondents

The questionnaire was constructed from four different sections: the respondents' biographic information, the respondents' satisfaction level of services provided by the case company, their opinion on the marketing communications in general, and their views on the marketing communications of OLDI. In addition, the questionnaire was constructed including one open question for the target group who wants to comment on any matters. Also, sending this questionnaire for this particular target group was a beneficial marketing action, to inform OLDI's clients more about OLDI's services.

The questionnaire was sent to 67 respondents and from this number 39 responses were received and this represents 69 percent males and 31 percent females as shown in Figure 10 on the next page.

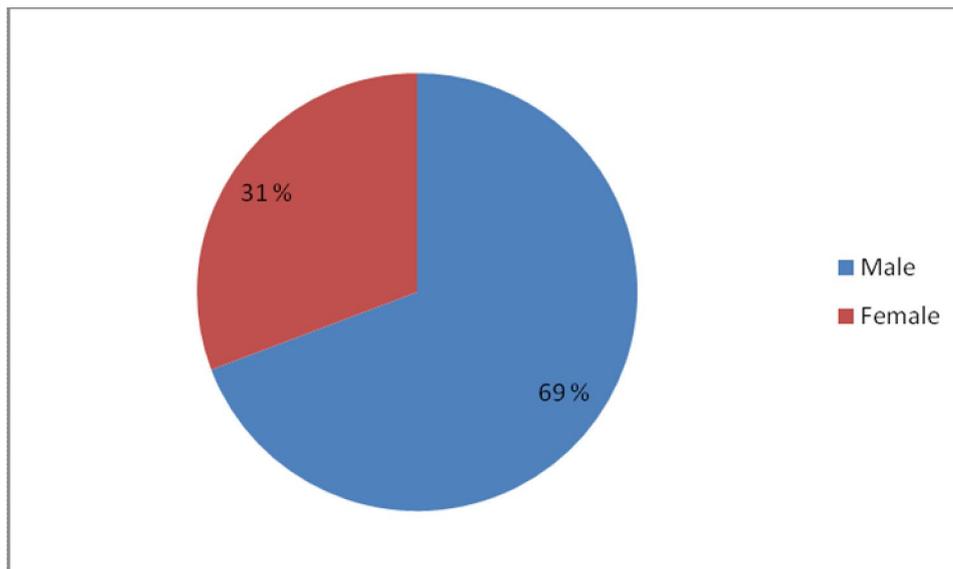


Figure 10: Gender dispersion of answers

As illustrated in figure 11, none of the respondents were under the age of 20 and only 5 percent represent both the age groups of 20-25 and above 61, and 32 percent represent the ages between 36-45 while 67 percent belong to the ages of 26-35.

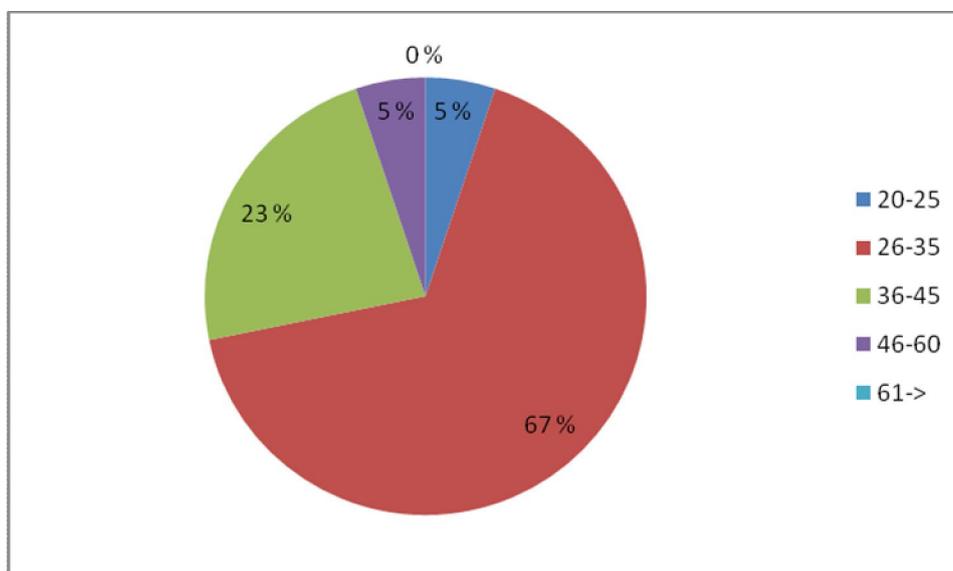


Figure 11: Age dispersion of answers

The dispersion of the respondents' business contacts with the case company can be seen in figure 12 on the next page, here 8% represent those with a maximum of 15 years contacts. Those with the highest percentages of 56 percent of contacts are between 6-10 years.

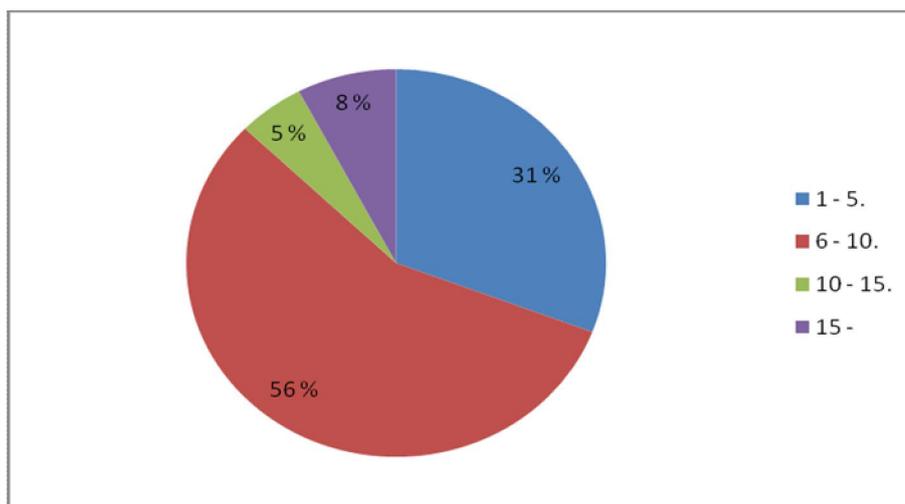


Figure 12: Dispersion of the respondents contacts with OLDI

The dispersion of the respondents' working position in the company can be seen from table 4 in below. The highest number is 20 which are the purchasing managers and 4 are managing directors, 6 respondents were product managers.

Designation	Frequency	percentage
Managing Director	4	10.25
General Manager	3	7.69
Manager (Purchasing)	20	51.29
Marketing Director	2	5.13
Product Manager	6	15.39
Supply Manager	1	2.56
Head of Logistics	1	2.56

Table 4: Respondents position in OLDI

## 5.2 OLDI's services and customer services

These results show the current satisfaction level of the case company's services offered to its potential clients and customers. along with that the research also have measure the current satisfaction level of the subjects. In addition, the main purpose is to help the company make better modification if needed for better customer services. The customers had in each question a choice from 1 to 5 to answer and claim whether they totally agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree and totally disagree.

### 5.2.1 Customer's satisfaction level of OLDI's services

Figure 13 in below shows whether OLDI's customer services meet the clients' demand satisfaction and 51 percent partially agree, 16% totally agree and 23% neither agree nor disagree. According to the results, the satisfaction level of the customer services is very good, as the greater percentage of the respondents' opinion about this service is satisfactory.

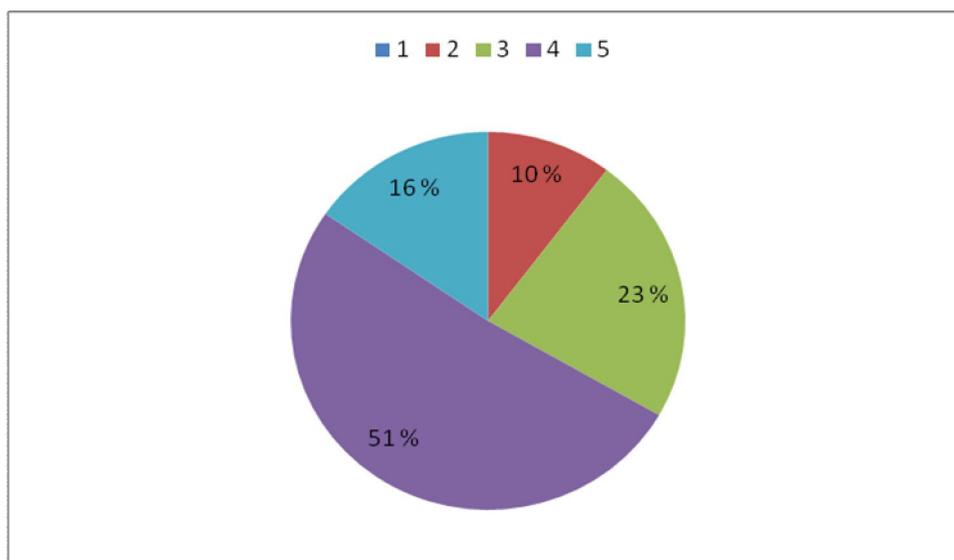


Figure 13: OLDI's services that meet the respondents' demands

### 5.2.2 Customers' awareness of OLDI's service satisfaction level

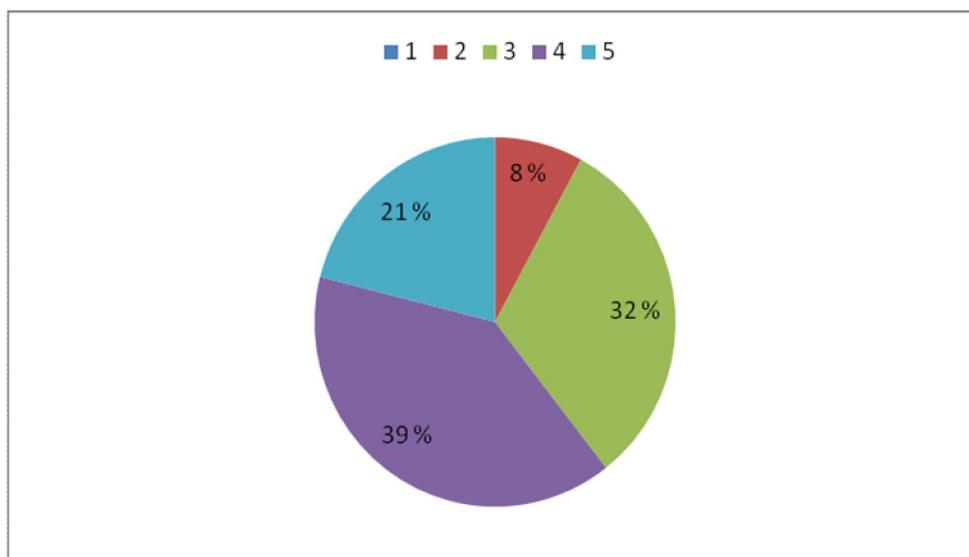


Figure 14: OLDI's service satisfaction level awareness

Figure 14 on the previous page shown opinion of respondents about the awareness of OLDI's services satisfaction level to its retail customers. This shows whether the services are understandable and for the customers' utilization. Thirty nine (39) percent respondents totally agree that the awareness of OLDI's services are satisfactory, 32% agree, 21% neither agree nor disagree and 8% do not agree with awareness of the services level satisfaction of OLDI.

### 5.2.3 Satisfaction level of OLDI's Wide product range

Figure 15 below shows the respondents' opinion about OLDI's wide product range service.

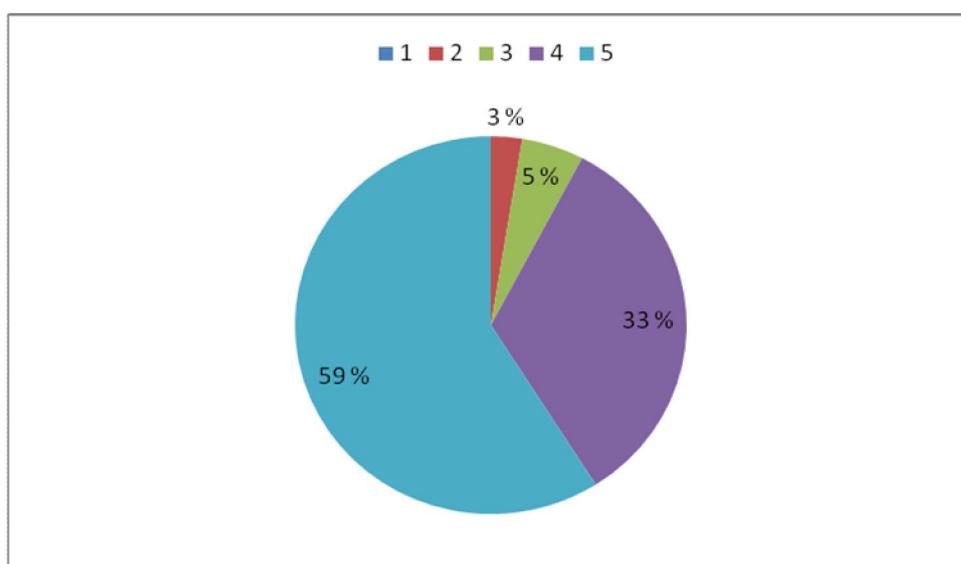


Figure 15: Satisfaction level of OLDI has wide product range

It can be seen from figure 15 that the satisfaction results of OLDI's wide product range is very positive as 59% of the respondents totally agree and 33% of respondents agree. Only 5 percent of the answers show that this service is neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory and 3 percent respondents' opinion was unsatisfactory. There was no negative opinion about OLDI's wide product range services.

### 5.2.4 Satisfaction level for OLDI's flexible financial terms

In figure 16 on the next page, the respondents gave their opinion about the payment flexibility of the case company in terms of payment transfer and credit line offered to clients.

The purpose of the question was to examine the current satisfaction level for OLDI payment service systems and identify which one the customers actually utilize most in the same category. 54% of the respondents were of the opinion that OLDI's flexible financial terms are very

satisfactory as they totally agree. 36% of the respondents somehow agree and only 10% of respondents neither agree nor disagree. According to the results, most of the customers had the opinion that the financial terms are very flexible and it is easy to make transaction with OLDI.

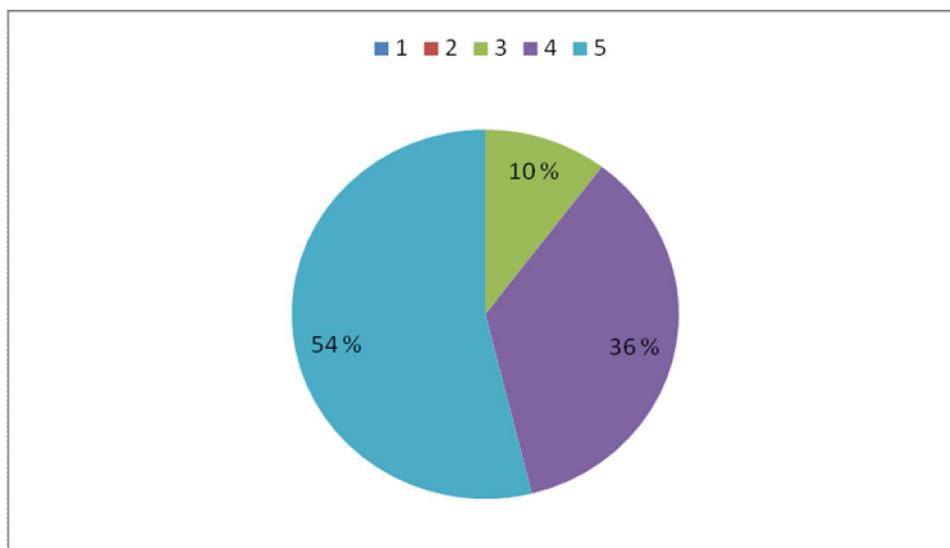


Figure 16: OLDI offers flexible financial terms

#### 5.2.5 Satisfaction level for OLDI's Information and technical support

The respondents' opinion on the information and technical support service is illustrated from figure 17.

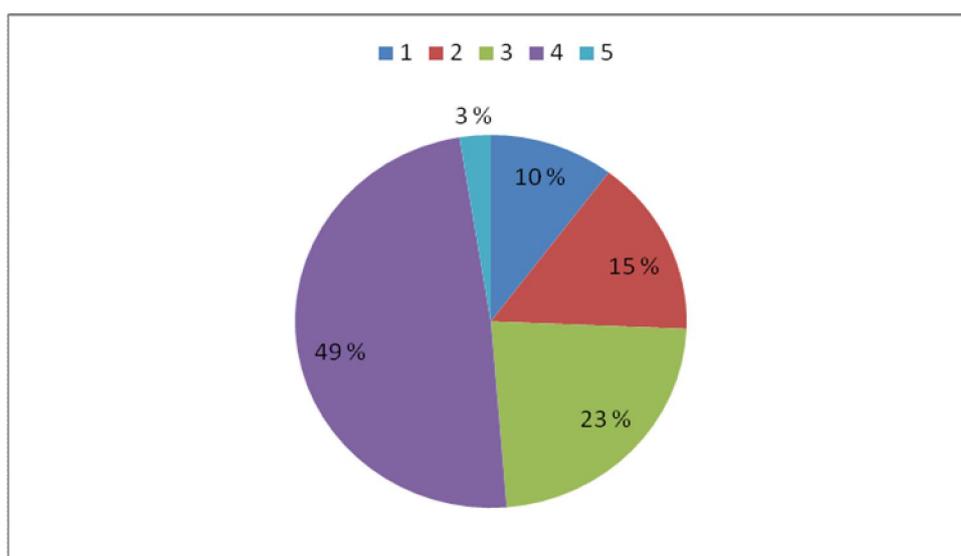


Figure 17: OLDI provide information and technical support

It can be seen from this figure 17 on the earlier page that 49% of the respondents were somewhat satisfied with the information service provided by OLDI about its new product and the technical support services offered. 3% of the respondents experience that the service is totally satisfied whether 25% of respondents' opinion is negative 23% of the answered shows they are either satisfied or dissatisfied with the information service about new products, and technical support. The results also shows that this service is not totally satisfied with the maximum customers as only 52% of respondents sees as satisfactory whether half of the respondents gave opinion as negative or neutral.

#### 5.2.6 Satisfaction level for OLDI's sales promotion

Figure 18 below shows the dispersion and percentages of answers concerning the OLDI customer service satisfaction level in sales promotion. This result shows that 49% of the respondents were totally in agreement of the successfulness of the sales promotion program, 31% were satisfied while 15% of respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied whether 5% of respondents' opinions had received as somewhat unsatisfied. In general according to the survey 80 percent respondents opinions were satisfactory about OLDI's Sales promotion.

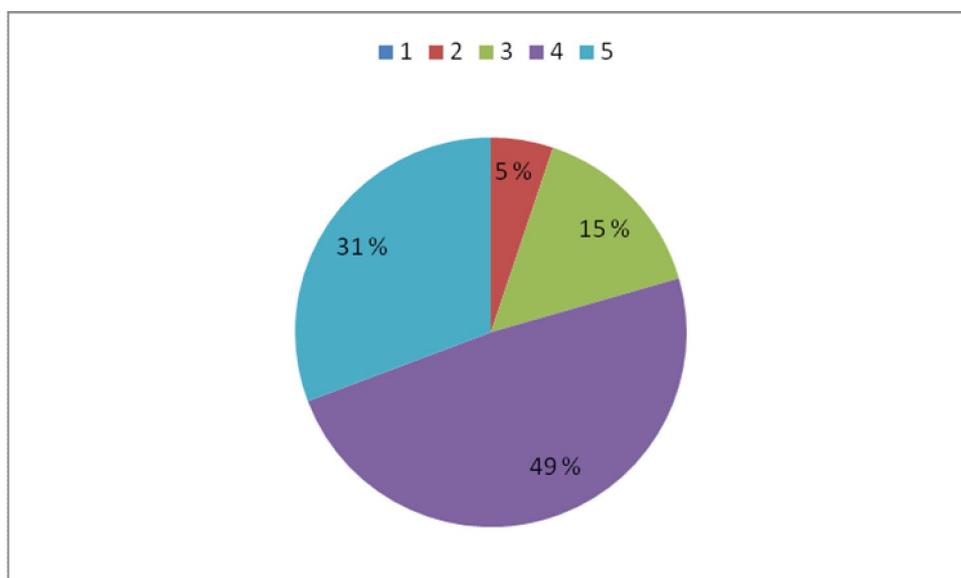


Figure 18: OLDI's sales promotion is successful

#### 5.2.7 Satisfaction level of OLDI's loyalty program

The success and satisfaction level for the case company's loyalty program can be examined in figure 19 on next page.

As illustrated from figure 19, 55% of the customers are satisfied with the loyalty service of OLDI's program, 29% show satisfaction while 8% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 5% were not satisfied and finally 3% were completely dissatisfied.

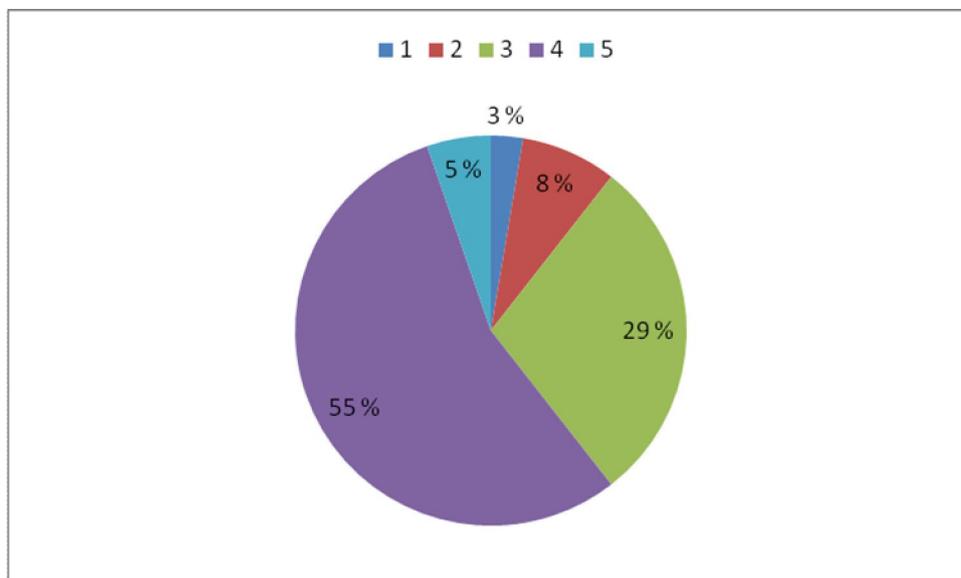


Figure 19: How beneficial is OLDI's Loyalty program to clients?

#### 5.2.8 Satisfaction level for OLDI's special offers

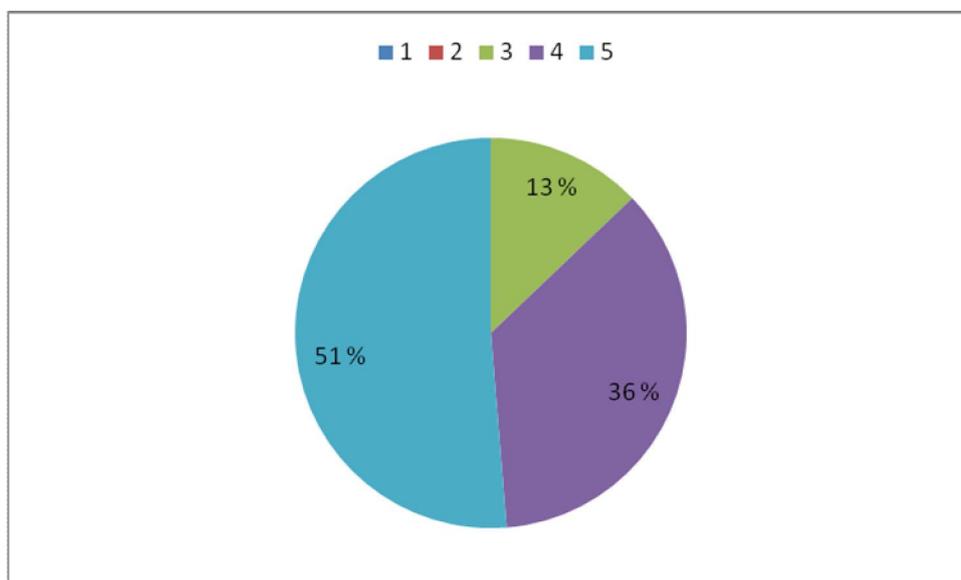


Figure 20: Clients and customers are aware of OLDI's special offers

Figure 20 illustrates the satisfaction level for the awareness of OLDI special offer service to its clients and retail customers. According to the survey, most of the respondents of this sur-

vey experience totally satisfied about OLDI's special offer from OLDI and this represents 51%. 36% are satisfied and only 13% of respondents neither disagree nor agree. This is a clear indication that OLDI's special offer has been successful to its target groups.

#### 5.2.9 Satisfaction level for OLDI's warehouse program

Figure 21 presented below shows the respondents' opinion and the satisfaction level of the service of warehouse support offered by OLDI to its clients.

This figure illustrate that OLDI's warehouse support program has been able to meet its customer's full demands. The results shows that, maximum respondents have received this service from OLDI as 56% of respondents are totally satisfied and 39% are satisfied. Only 5% of respondents experience in agreement or disagree with this support program. This result has reflex that OLDI's warehouse support is very effective and well organized for its clients and clients are very pleased to receive such services from this company.

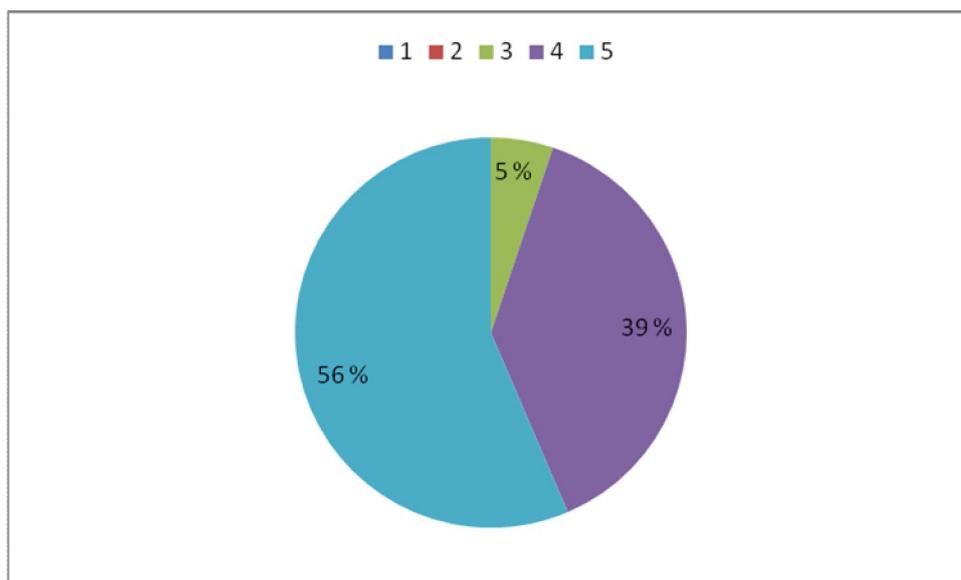


Figure 21: How beneficial OLDI's warehouse support services are to clients

#### 5.2.10 Satisfaction level for OLDI's delivery to all destinations

OLDI has an all the destination delivery service and figure 22 illustrates customers' satisfactory level with this service.

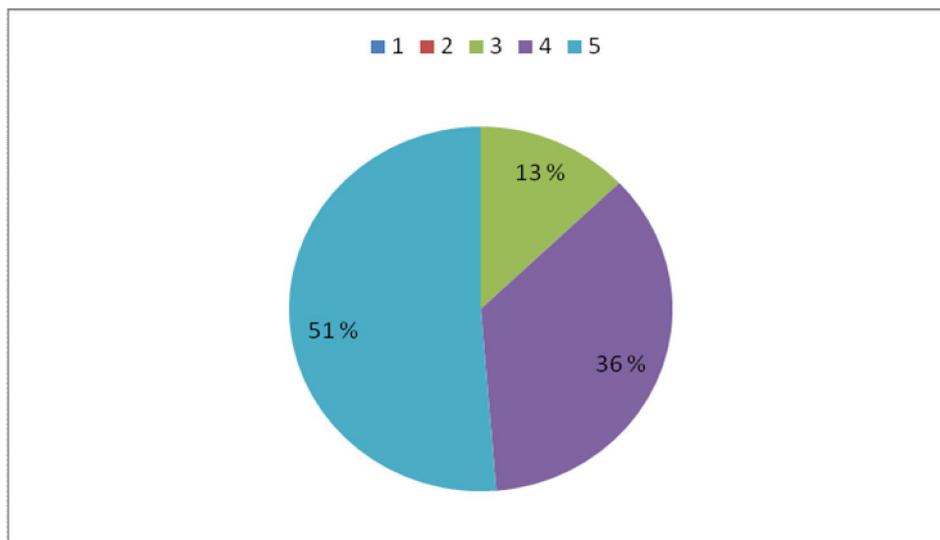


Figure 22: OLDI's delivery to all destinations

As figure 22 shows, 51% of respondents had total satisfaction for the all-destination delivery service offered by OLDI. 36% of respondents were satisfied and 13% opinion were neither agreed nor disagreement for this service. In this regard, a majority of respondents' opinion were that OLDI has been successful in delivery to all destinations.

#### 5.2.11 Satisfaction level for OLDI's qualified personnel

The respondents' opinions and the satisfaction level for OLDI's in qualified personnel are illustrated in figure 23 below.

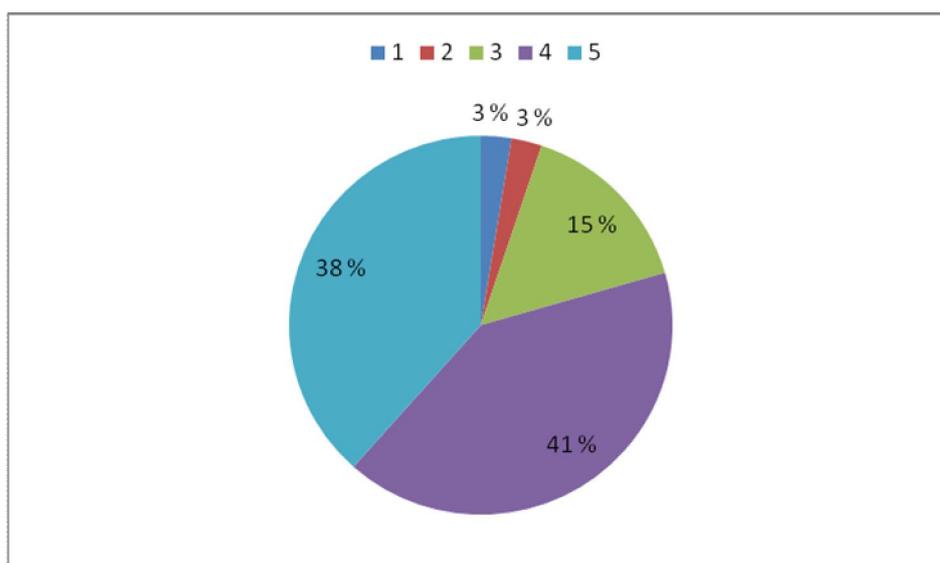


Figure 23: OLDI's customers service is skilled and professional

The figure 23 shows whether OLDI's representatives are able to convince stage the customers or not. The views were clear as to the company's qualified personnel who are able to give proper customer service to the clients and retail customers, as is indicated by 41% having satisfaction. The perceptions were mainly positive for 38 % of respondents' opinion as good and 15% of respondents were neither disagree or agree. 6% of respondents neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This shows that employees who are responsible for retail customers work efficiently.

#### 5.2.12 Satisfaction level for OLDI's new technology sales

OLDI's satisfaction level in new technology sales are introduced in figure 24 below.

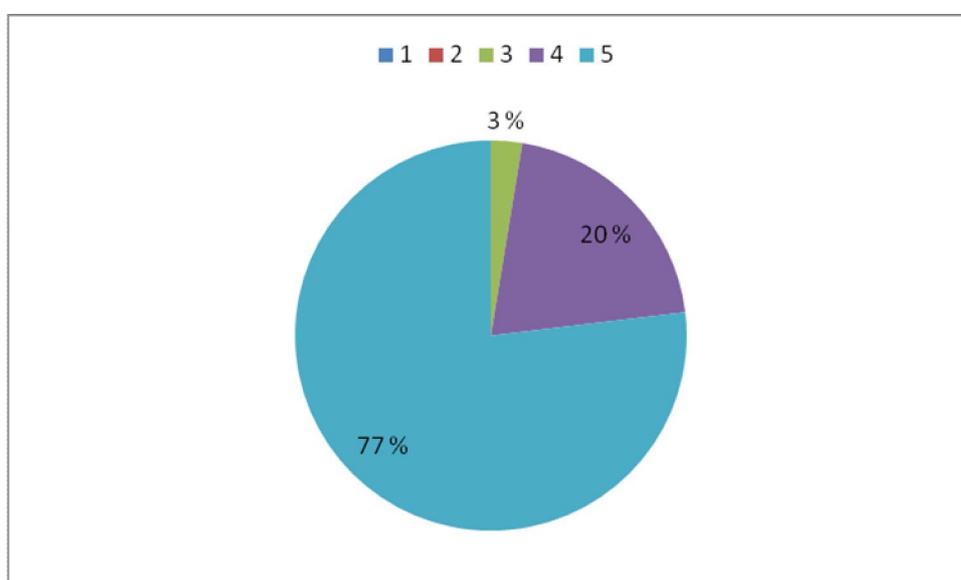


Figure 24: OLDI continuously updates the product range with new technology

As this figure illustrates, 77% of the respondents totally agreed with the fact that OLDI continuously updates its product range with new technology. 20% of the respondents somewhat agreed in the same context and those who neither agree nor disagree represent only 3%. The 77% shows that in general respondents were totally satisfied with this service offered by OLDI.

#### 5.3 OLDI's B2B Marketing Communication

This section gives the general opinion of business-to-business marketing communication tools and how informative, convincing and reliable it is to the OLDI's clients.

#### 5.4 Reliability of business-to-business marketing communications tools

Tables 5, 6 and 7 below represent the frequencies of respondents' responses about how the different business-to-business marketing communications tools are reliable.

	Personal selling	Communication via electronic mail	Web page	Seminars and conferences
Untrue (A)				
Somewhat untrue (B)				
No opinion (C)	2	1	1	17(43.59%)
Somewhat true (D)	23	12	7	17
True (E)	14(35.90%)	26(66.67%)	31(79.49%)	5

Table 5: Reliability of business-to-business marketing communications

As table 5 illustrates, respondents view the reliability of personal selling as reliable, with 36 percent having the opinion that the statement about the reliability of personal selling is true. Two respondents agree to that the personal selling is reliable media of marketing communication tool to a certain extent. This table also shows that 67% of respondents agreed that the communication via electronic mail is reliable.

The Webpage communication is viewed by the respondents as reliable, as table 5 illustrate that 79% of respondents' experienced webpage as totally reliable communication tools and 18% of the respondents view webpage as reliable communication tools. 44% of respondents had a neutral opinion that the seminars and conferences are a reliable communication tools. 44% of respondents think seminars and conference is a reliable communication tools while 13% of respondents think it totally reliable.

	Advertisement in trade magazines	Trade shows	Public relations	Sales promotion
Untrue (A)				
Somewhat untrue (B)			1	
No opinion (C)	11	16	18(46.16%)	2
Somewhat true (D)	19(48.72%)	8	13	11
True (E)	9	15(38.47%)	7	26(66.67%)

Table 6: Reliability of business-to-business marketing communications

Advertising in trade magazines are experienced by the respondents as being reliable as can be seen from table 6. Most of the respondents see advertising in trade magazine as totally reliable as 48.72% of the respondents give opinion about advertising in trade magazines. 9 respondents representing 23% were of the opinion that OLDI's business-to-business communication tools are reliable. Trade shows are analyzed by the respondents as being reliable business-to-business marketing communications tools as 39% stand for this assertion. 41 percent of the respondents also gave a neutral opinion of the reliability of trade shows. Again table 6 shows how the respondents gave their opinion about the public relations and there were 46% neutral opinion about its reliability. 33% gave opinion about how reliable it is and 18% completely agreed to its reliability. The sales promotions section shows that 67% completely agreed with its reliability and 28% respondents agreed that sales promotion is reliable communication tools while 33% of respondents were of neutral opinion.

	Billboard	TV Advertisement	Sports sponsorship
Untrue (A)			
Somewhat untrue (B)			
No opinion (C)	1	16(41%)	12
Somewhat true (D)	24(61.54%)	14	21(54%)
True (E)	14	9	6

Table 7: Reliability of business-to-business marketing communications

Table 7 above, billboard is viewed by the respondents as fairly reliable with 62% responses and 36% of respondents' opinion as completely reliable. The reliability of television advertisement is viewed rather neutrally with the 41% of the respondents giving their view in this context. Again 36% of respondents' opinion as reliable while 23% completely agree that television advertising is a reliable marketing communication tools. From table 7, it can be seen that sports sponsorship is considered as being very reliable marketing communication tools. There are no respondents who view sports sponsorship as being unreliable business-to-business marketing communication tools.

#### 5.5 Convincibility of business-to-business marketing communications tools

In table 8 on the next page, illustrates the respondents' opinions on the convincibility of different business-to-business marketing communication tools.

From table 8, it can be seen that the respondents view the convincibility of business-to-business personal selling to a certain extent convincing while 70% of the respondents agree

that the personal selling is a convincing marketing communication tools. None of the respondents view this marketing communications tool as being completely unconvincing. Communication via electronic mail is viewed by the respondents neutrally. Two respondents are of the opinion that communication via electronic mail an unconvincing marketing communication tool and two respondents view it as being somewhat unconvincing.

According to the respondents, webpage as a business-to-business marketing communications tool being more convincing than communication via electronic mail. 4 respondents concerned webpage as completely unconvincing communications tool while 5 respondents viewed as unconvincing. 54% of respondents' opinion was as completely convincing communications tool. Seminars and conferences organized by other companies are completely convincing in the opinions of the respondents. No respondents gave opinion that this marketing communications tool as unconvincing.

	Personal selling	Communication via electronic mail	Web page	Seminars and conferences
Untrue (A)		2	2	
Somewhat untrue (B)		3	5	
No opinion (C )	2	17(43.59%)	9	19(48.72%)
Somewhat true (D)	10	15(38.47%)	2	13(33.34%)
True (E)	27(69.24%)	2	21(54%)	7

Table 8: Convincibility of business-to-business marketing communications

	Advertisements in trade magazines	Trade shows	Public relations	Sales promotion
Untrue (A)	1	4		
Somewhat untrue (B)	1	2	2	
No opinion (C )	14	14	18(46.16%)	1
Somewhat true (D)	11	14(36%)	11	11
True (E)	12(31%)	6	8	27(69.24%)

Table 9: Convincibility of business-to-business marketing communications

Advertising in trade magazines are viewed as quite convincing marketing communications tools. 31% of respondents had the view that advertising in trade magazines is quite convincing

in a certain context as 31% were completely convinced, 28% convinced and 36% of respondents had a neutral opinion. The negative responses were insignificant.

From table 9 it can be illustrate that trade shows are viewed by respondents' nearly same results as advertisements in trade magazines. 36% of respondents and 6 respondents' viewed trade shows are totally convincing business-to-business marketing communications tool and also 6 respondents viewed trade show is not convincing at all as some others communications tools are convincing.

Public relations perceived by respondents as convincing marketing communications tool. 46 percent of respondents had a neutral opinion regarding public relations and 11 respondents viewed this is a convincing marketing communications tool while 8 respondents opinions as completely convincing. From table 9 it can be seen that the convincibility of sales promotions are perceived by the respondents as very vastly. 69.24% of respondents' viewed sales promotion as totally convincing marketing communications tool while 11 respondents perceive sales promotion as a convincing communications tool. There was no negative opinion regarding sales promotion.

	Billboard	TV Advertisement	Sports sponsorship
Untrue (A)	2	1	
Somewhat untrue (B)	4	1	
No opinion (C )	1	17(44%)	16
Somewhat true (D)	17(44%)	12	16(41%)
True (E)	15	8	10

Table 10: Convincibility of business-to-business marketing communications

As shown in table 10, billboard and TV advertising is perceived as being convincing by the respondents with positive responses. 44% of respondents had opinion that billboard as being convincing business-to-business marketing communications tool and 38% of respondents perceived as totally convincing. 18% of respondents had opinion as a neutral and not convincing at all. Television advertising is perceived by the respondents as a convincing marketing communications tool, 44% of respondents had a neutral opinion and 31% of respondents opinion as convincing while 21% opinion were as completely convincing. According to the respondents, Sports sponsorship and sales promotion these both marketing communications tool are totally convincing and 26% of respondents had opinion as completely convincing while 41% respondents are perceived as convincing. 41% had a neutral opinion regarding sports sponsorship.

## 5.6 Informativeness of OLDI's B2B marketing communication tools

Tables 11, 12 and 13 below illustrate the respondents' views on the informativeness of OLDI's communication tools.

	Personal selling	Communication via electronic mail	Web page	Seminars and conferences
Untrue (A)				
Somewhat untrue (B)				
No opinion (C )	10	3	1	20(51.29%)
Somewhat true (D)	14	9	9	12
True (E)	15(38.47%)	27(69.24%)	29(74.36%)	7

Table 11: Informativeness of business-to-business marketing communications tools

The larger number of respondents representing 34% perceived personal selling as a completely informative tool, 34% perceived as informative while 26% of respondents had a neutral opinion concerning personal selling as a informative marketing communications tool. According to 69% of respondents, communication via electronic mail is completely informative. 23% opinions as informative and 8% respondents had a neutral opinion respectively.

Internet pages such as WebPages are viewed by the respondents as being quite informative, which is indicated in table 11 with 74%, giving complete, 23% as fairly and remaining percent as neutral respectively. Seminars and conferences as communication tool are perceived by their clients as follows; 18% said completely informative, 31% gave it as fairly, and 51% were of neutral view respectively.

	Advertisements in trade magazines	Trade shows	Public relations	Sales promotion
Untrue (A)				
Somewhat untrue (B)		1		
No opinion (C )	18	18	17(44%)	
Somewhat true (D)	8	13	12	13
True (E)	13(33.34%)	7	10	26(66.67%)

Table 12: Informativeness of business-to-business marketing communications tools

Table 12 above shows how respondents view the informativeness of advertising, trade shows, public relations and sales promotion. 33% of respondents said that advertisements in trade magazines are completely informative, 46% of respondents had a neutral opinion and 21% perceived as an informative marketing communications tool. According to respondents opinion trade shows are informative marketing communications tool while 18% of respondents as being completely informative and 13% perceived as informative. 46% of respondents had a neutral opinion regarding trade shows as marketing communications tool.

As table 12 indicates respondents' opinion concerning public relation as business-to-business marketing communications tool as being completely informative. 31% of respondents' had opinion as informative while 44% had a neutral opinion. 67% of respondents perceived as completely informative and 33% informative regarding sales promotion as marketing communications tool and this means that in general they experience sales promotion as very reliable and informative as well.

Finally table 13 shows how respondents gave their opinions about the informativeness of business-to-business marketing communication tools such as billboard, television advertisements and sports sponsorship. Billboards are perceived by the respondents as being more informative than others marketing communication tools. Most of the respondents claim that billboards are informative while 15 respondents had opinion that completely informative. There was no negative opinion concerning billboard as a making communications tool. 26% said advertisements on television are completely informative, 44% of respondents had a neutral opinion while 30% perceived as informative. The last aspect of this assertion is on sports sponsorship, 15% of respondents concerned as completely informative and 51% as informative while 33% of respondents had a neutral opinion.

	Billboard	TV Advertisement	Sports sponsorship
Untrue (A)			
Somewhat untrue (B)			
No opinion (C )	1	17	13
Somewhat true (D)	23(59%)	11	20(51.29%)
True (E)	15	10(26%)	6

Table 13: Informativeness of business-to-business marketing communications tools

## 5.7 Respondents' views on B2B marketing communications of OLDI

The following charts illustrate how well the case company has succeeded in the marketing communication tools.

### 5.7.1 Successfulness of OLDI's personal selling

Figure 25 below shows the dispersion and percentages of answers concerning OLDI's success in personal selling.

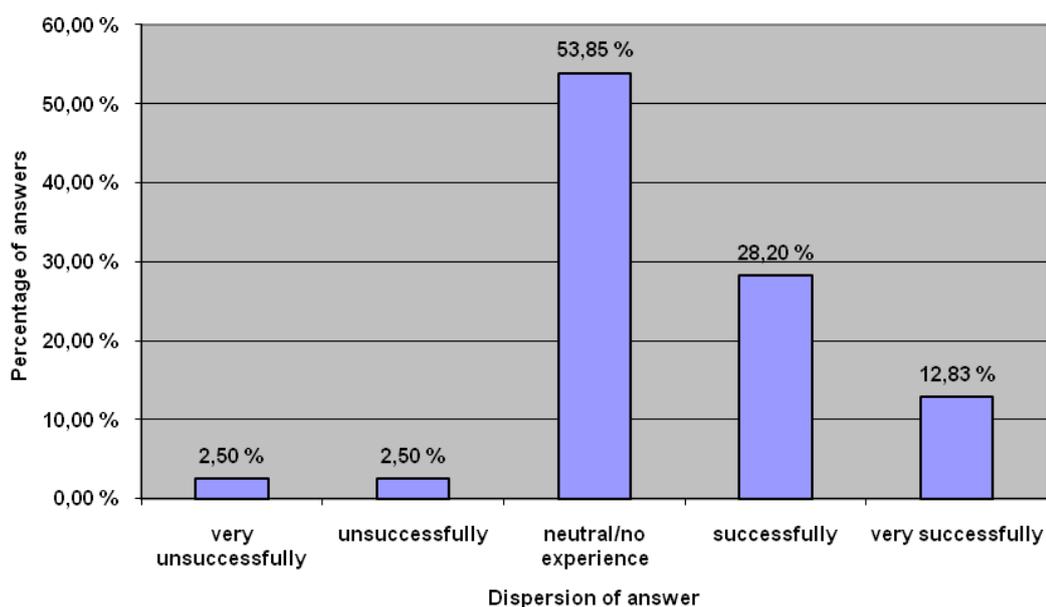


Figure 25: Success in personal selling

As seen from figure 25, about 13% of respondents opinion OLDI's personal selling as being very successful, 28% as successful, 54% respondents' opinion were neutral while the remaining 3 percent each gave their views as unsuccessful and very unsuccessful. According to the result, OLDI's personal selling approach as one of its successful marketing communication tools to its clients.

### 5.7.2 Successfulness of OLDI in communication via electronic mail

The success of the case company in communication via electronic mail can be examined in figure 26 on the next page.

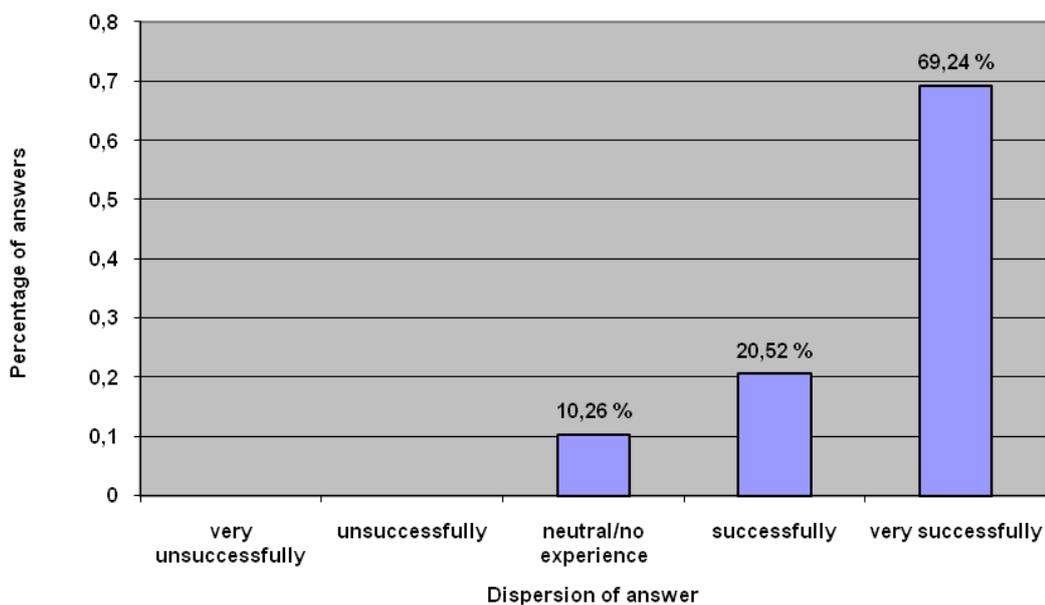


Figure 26: success in communication via electronic mail

From figure 26 it can be seen how well the case company OLDI has succeeded in its communication practices to its clients via electronic mails. 69 percent of the respondents opinion that it has been very successful in this regard, 21% viewed it as successful while only 11 percent of them indicated neutral opinion. None of the answers assessed this marketing communications tool as unsuccessful and very unsuccessful.

### 5.7.3 Success of OLDI's web page

The respondents' opinions on the case company's success of the webpage as a marketing communication tool is illustrated in figure 27 on next page.

The opinions were clear that the success of the OLDI webpage is very high as indicated by 56% and 28% of the respondents viewed that the OLDI webpage was successful. Only 13 percent of the respondents had a neutral opinion on the webpage while 2.57% gave respondents opinion were as unsuccessful.

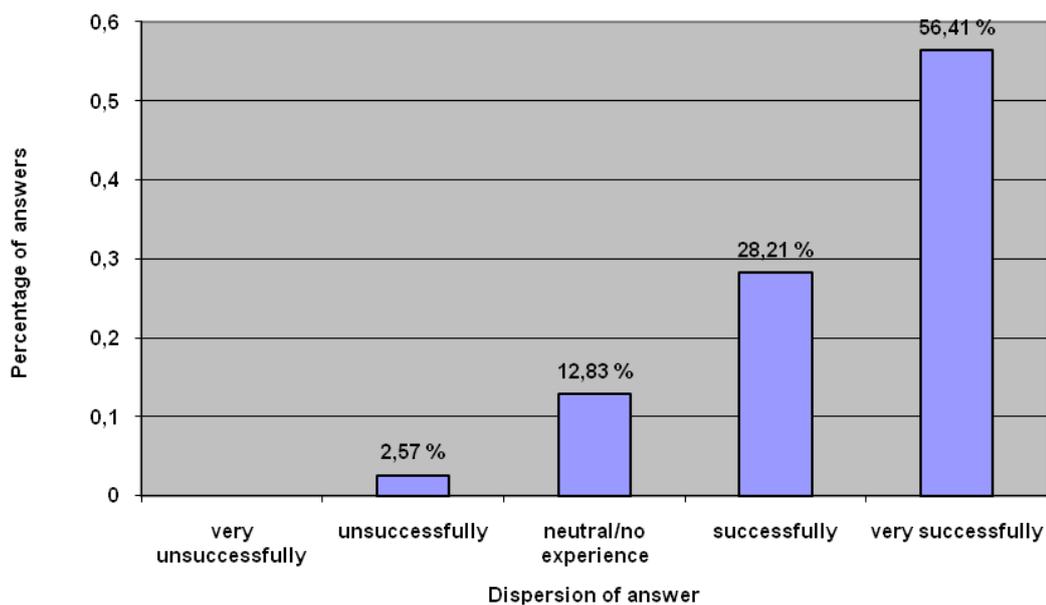


Figure 27: Success of OLDI's webpage

#### 5.7.4 Successfulness of OLDI in seminars and conference

The success of the case company OLDI in seminars and conference can be examined in figure 28 from the next page.

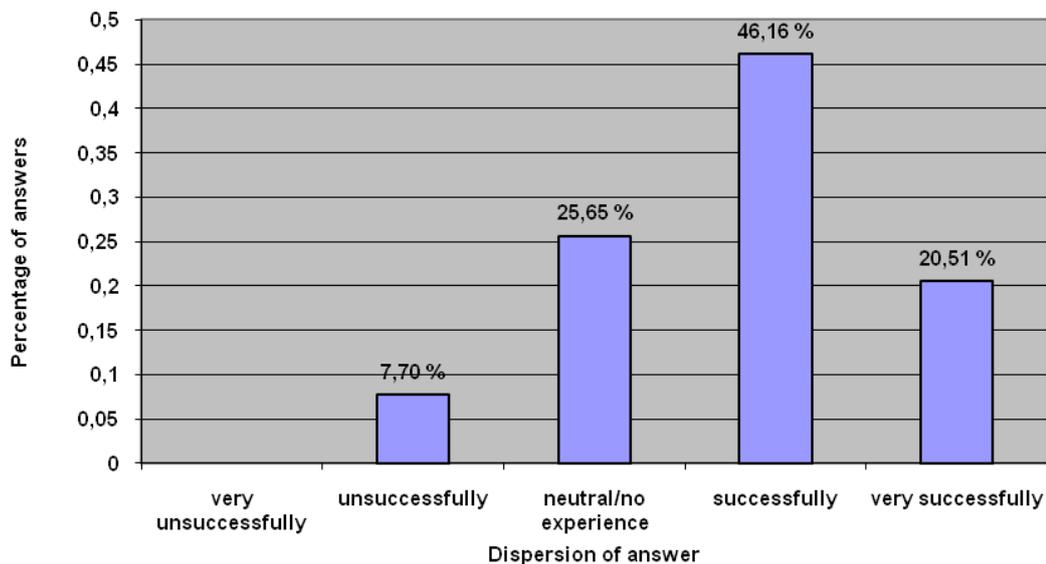


Figure 28: Success in seminars and conference

The results of this figure 28 show how successful seminars and conferences organized by OLDI have been and 21 percent of the respondents perceived them as very successful. 46 percent

respondents opinion were that OLDI was successful in seminars and conference as a marketing communication tools and 26% as neutral, while 8% of respondents opinion were as unsuccessful.

#### 5.7.5 Success of OLDI in advertisements in trade magazines

Figure 29 below shows the dispersion and number of answers about OLDI's success in advertising in trade magazines.

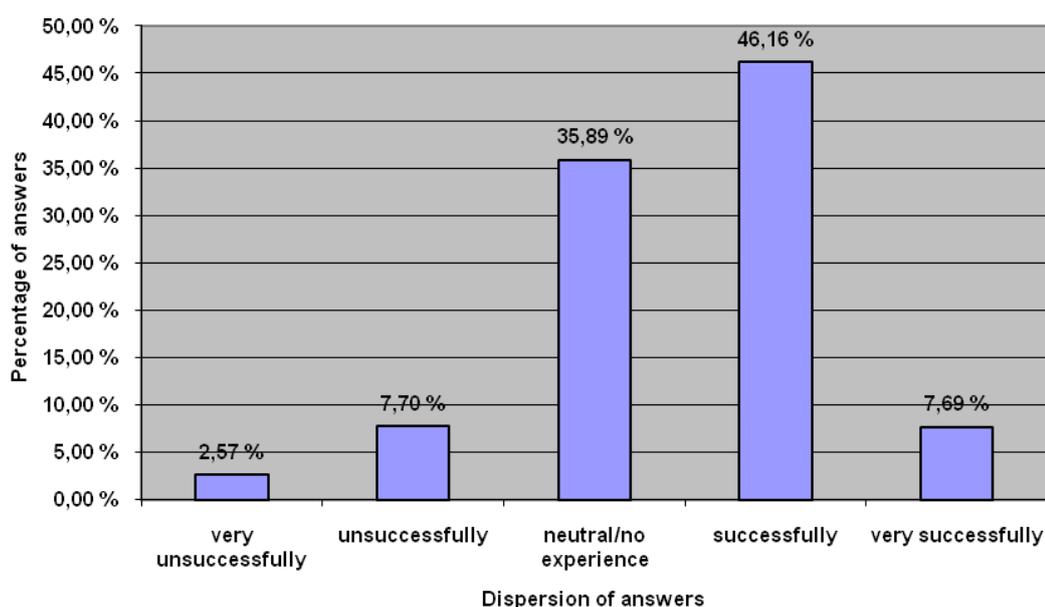


Figure 29: Success in advertisement in trade magazines

As figure 29 shows, OLDI has been having success in conducting product and service communication to its clients through trade magazine advertisements. 8 percent of respondents indicated the success very well while the majority thought it has been successful. 36% of respondents have either neutral or no experience at all. 8% unsuccessful and 2.57 percent perceived conduction very unsuccessful of this communication practice by OLDI.

#### 5.7.6 Success of OLDI in trade shows

Figure 30 presents on next page respondents' opinion on the success of trade show participation by the case company OLDI.

As illustrated figure 30, maximum respondents of the survey had no experience in participating trade shows organized by OLDI whether 31% of respondents' opinion that the trade shows participation has been successful and 3% of respondents' opinion as very successful. There

was also negative response on the successfulness of trade show as 13% of respondents' opinion that OLDI has been unsuccessful in participation in trade show as a business-to business marketing communication tool.

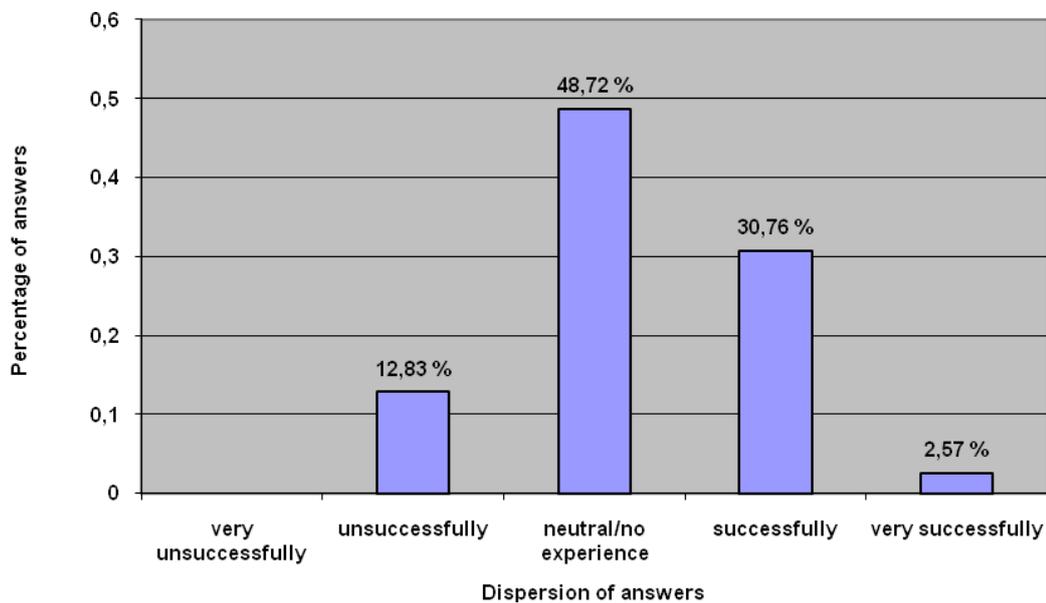


Figure 30: Successfulness of OLDI's participation in trade shows

#### 5.7.7 Success of OLDI in public relations

The dispersion and percentage of answers of OLDI's success in public relations are introduced in figure 31.

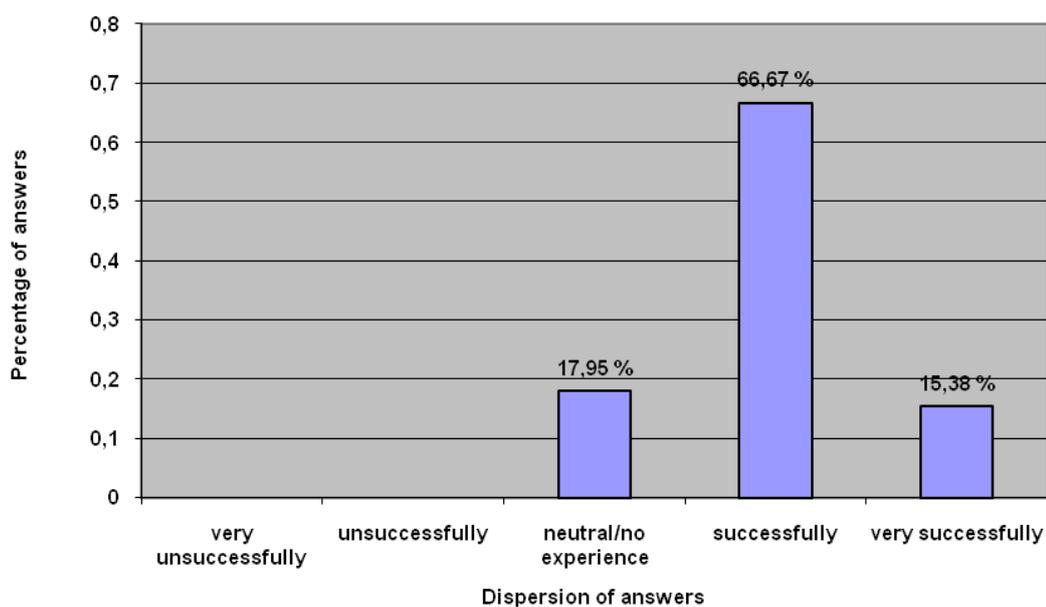


Figure 31: Success of OLDI's public relations

From figure 31, 15% of respondents' opinion that OLDI has been very successful in public relations with 67 percent answering that OLDI has been successful and 18% of respondents had a neutral opinion. In general it can be seen that this communication approach adopted by OLDI has been successful.

#### 5.7.8 Success of OLDI in sales promotion

The dispersion and percentage of answers of the case company's success in sales promotion is introduced in figure 32 in below. The respondents considered the case company's success in sales promotion is good with 46% indicating that it has been very successful and 31% successful. 23 percent of respondents had a neutral or no experience view.

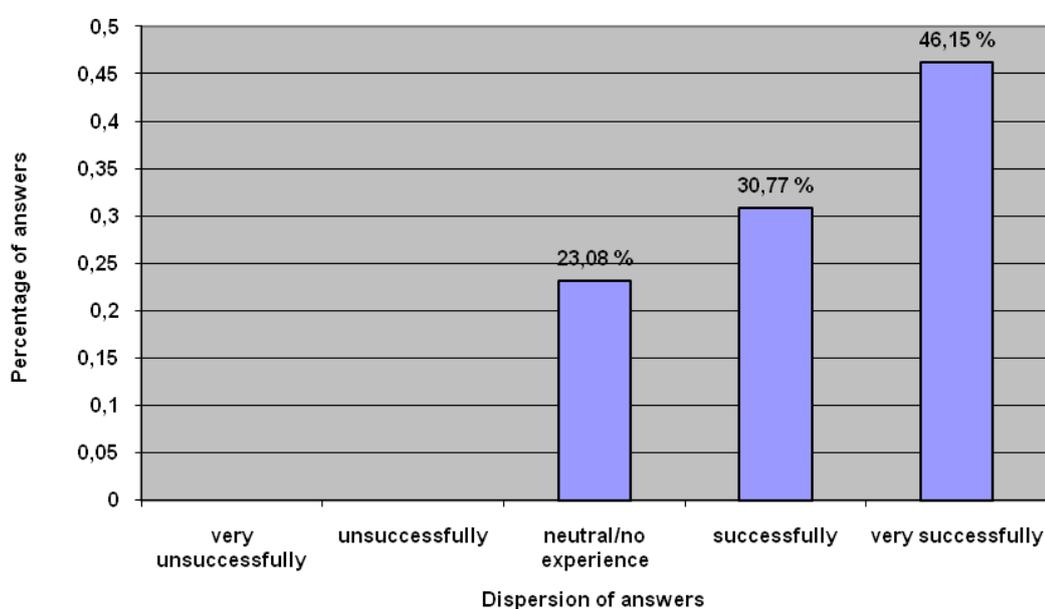


Figure 32: Success of OLDI sales promotion

#### 5.7.9 Successfulness of OLDI in Bill Board

The figure 33 on next page illustrates the respondents' opinions on the success of OLDI in billboard campaigns.

The result shows in figure 33 a very successful campaign with the use of billboards as a communicative tool of OLDI's services to its clients. 72% of respondents evaluate the success is very good and 23% of respondents opinion has been successful and the remaining 5% had a neutral opinion regarding billboard as a business-to-business marketing communication tool.

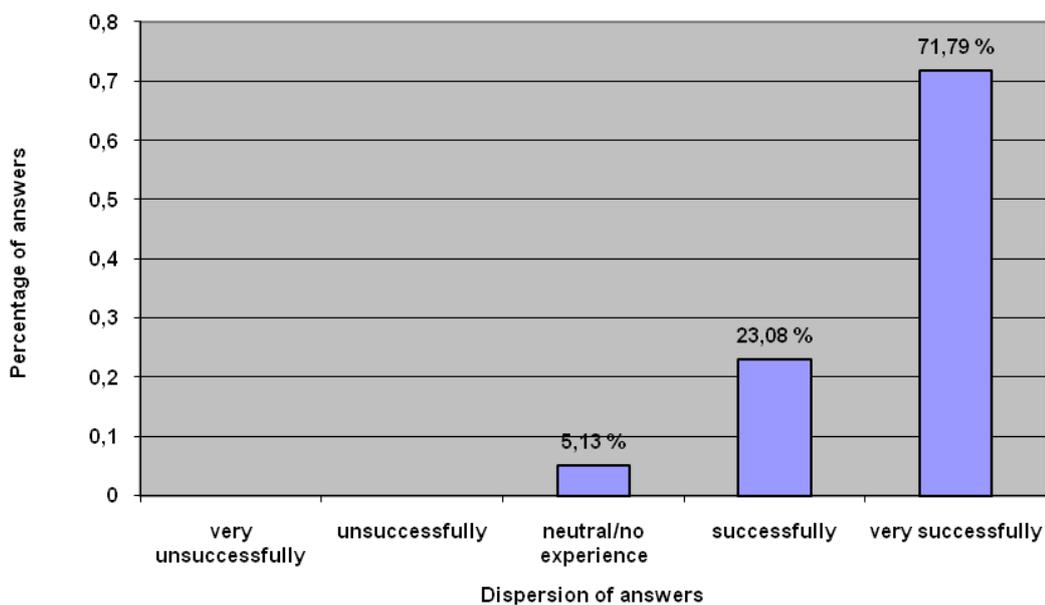


Figure 33: Success of OLDI's billboard advertising

#### 5.7.10 Success of OLDI in media advertising

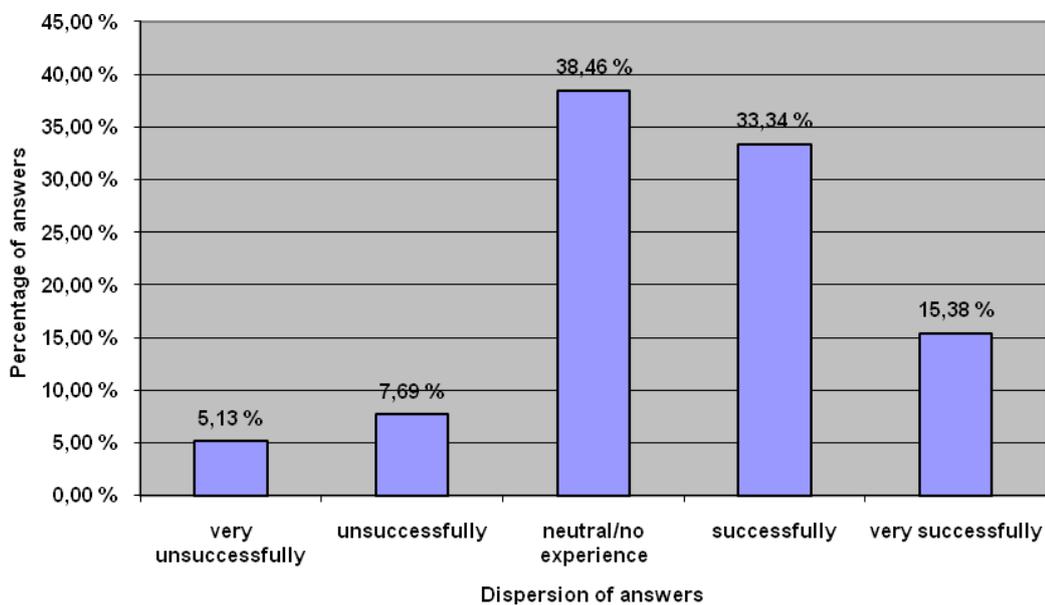


Figure 34: Success of OLDI's television advertisement

Figure 34 above illustrates the success in media advertising by OLDI whereby 15% respondents perceived that media advertising is a very successful business-to-business marketing communication tool and 34% as successful. 39% of the respondents had a neutral or no experience opinion while 8 and 5% gave their views as unsuccessful and very unsuccessful respectively. In

general it is clear that this means of B2B marketing communication has been successful in terms of OLDI's service to clients.

#### 5.7.11 Successfulness of OLDI in sponsorship

Figure 35 shows in below the success of the case company's marketing communication tool in sponsorship of sports, especially with football in the Russian federation.

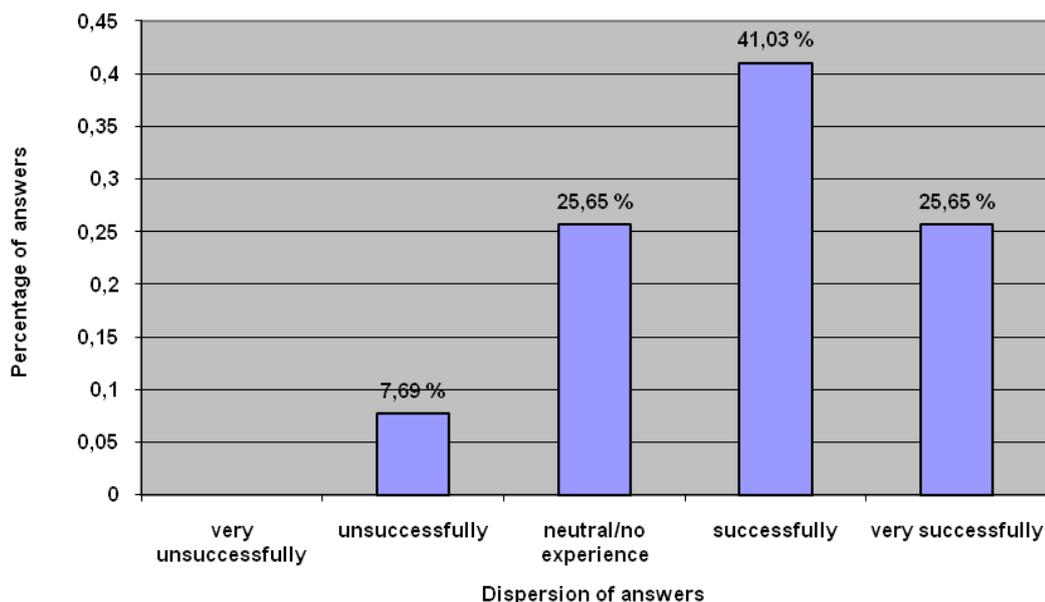


Figure 35: Success of OLDI sponsorship in a football team

As seen from the figure 35, the respondents' perceived that OLDI has been very successful sponsorship of a football team. 26% of the respondents consider that sponsorship in a football team was very successful and 41% opinion as successful communication tool. 26% of the respondents had a neutral or no experience regarding sponsorship in a football team as business-to-business marketing communication tool. In addition, 8% of the respondents pinion was as unsuccessful communication tool.

## 6 Conclusions and recommendation for developments

This is the section showing the general summary of the research analysis as follows.

### 6.1 Findings

The purpose of the thesis was to discover how the retail customers and clients are satisfied with the current services provided by OLDI as the case company for this research, at the same

time the research investigation of the target group's perception on the company's success of the communication tools in the area of business-to-business marketing communication. In addition, the main purpose was to collect valuable opinions for improvement of the services offered from OLDI to its key customers and also how to develop these marketing communication tools. The research has been completed by the use of both quantitative and qualitative research method approaches where there were possibilities for granting interviews and preparation of the questionnaire to the company's key customers.

#### 6.1.1 Respondents' opinion on OLDI's customer services

The study shows that the customers were satisfied with the current level of customer services in OLDI. The result of the research illustrated that, the satisfaction level of the customer service has been well achieved by OLDI. The maximum satisfaction areas of customer services are updates continually with new product and technology, skilled professional for customer care, delivery to all destinations, OLDI's modern and well equipped warehouse facilities, the loyalty program, sales promotions and flexible financial terms organized by this company.

According to the results, there are some services which could not be able to reach to OLDI's targets in providing services in the line of business-to-business customer service. These areas cover the sales promotion, technical support, the wide product range, a meet the demands of customers and the awareness of OLDI services. However, OLDI continually updates clients with new product and technology of which its customers gave very positive responses.

#### 6.1.2 Respondents' opinion on OLDI's marketing communications tools

According to the research results, the case company OLDI's success in marketing communication is very good. The results clearly indicate that the company has been able to succeed in the area of business-to-business marketing communication tools. Some of the areas of marketing communications tools need improvement though in the near future. The most successful and emphasized areas of the marketing communications tools are; the public relation, billboard campaign, seminars & conference, webpage, communication via electronic mail, sales promotion and sponsorship in sports. These areas of marketing communication tools are very common to the respondents and they have had the experiences as well. Besides that, according to the survey these areas of marketing communication had low neutral and negative attitude from the respondents which also gives it a big enhance. In general, the target group of the research perceived that, they are very familiar with business-to-business marketing communication tools which are offered by OLDI. Most of the respondents of this research concern that, OLDI's all marketing communication tools are very informative, reliable and convincing.

The results also shows that, the successfulness of other marketing communication tools such as participation in trade shows, advertisement in trade magazines, personal selling and media advertisement were evaluated more neutrally or negatively than positive attitude. This result indicated that, these are the areas of service by OLDI which clients are not very familiar with and therefore have not had any experience about them. However, communication via electronic mail resulted in the highest score of the case company's marketing communication tools as being highly appreciated by the respondents.

In addition, the results show that billboards, sales promotion, public relations and communication via electronic mail are the communication service areas where OLDI has been able to meet the demands of its customers and clients. There were not negative opinions regarding business-to-business marketing communication tools and there were no comments from respondents for further development or improvement of these communication tools. Therefore it seems to be perfect communication tools for this entire target group of clients in the company's business operations. All respondents of this research seemed to be satisfied with the services offered by OLDI.

It is useful and important for a company such as OLDI to receive positive comments from its customers about the services and marketing communication provided to them. This was as a result of the few positive comments made by respondents on the marketing communications tools of sports sponsorship, trade shows and seminars and conferences. According to the survey results, most of the respondents' perceived that personal selling, communication via electronic mail, webpage, seminars and conference, advertising in trade magazines and trade shows are quite reliable as a business-to-business marketing communication tools. In addition, the respondents' experienced that, sales promotion, spots sponsorship and seminars and conferences are more convincing than other marketing communication tools while personal selling, communication via electronic mail and webpage has been recommended by the respondents as more informative marketing communication tools. The result also shows that, the respondents of the survey were very familiar with all the marketing communication tools used by OLDI.

## 6.2 Suggestions

This section gives suggested opinions from the researcher on the findings made.

### 6.2.1 Suggestions for improving the customer services of OLDI

Based on the findings the conclusions are that in the electronics business it is important to understand the market and market penetration based on customer groups. It can be suggest

to categorizing the customer groups based on their business operation opportunities, areas of specialization, and experience. Once customer categorization is complete and followed, it will be significant to understand the business-to-business customer service level and customer buying behavior. Customer relationship is also one of the key terms of business activities or transactions, for the reason that the customers keep business contact only for good business communication. If there are some lack of business communication the possibilities to lose the customer groups is very high.

According to the survey result, the current customer service level of OLDI is very good and existing customers are very satisfied. The service system is versatile enough to satisfy the retail customers' needs and demands but to keep these services on the high standard there are some factors that need to be taken into consideration. These areas still need some changes and developments, for example, the opinions on OLDI's loyalty program awareness and finally the information and technical support system services. The current loyalty program needs to be rearranged in terms and benefits for success in this area. This loyalty program is of interest to the customer groups, so it has a valuable importance in retail selling opportunities for OLDI.

Information and technical support services such as the service to inform the customer groups about new inventions and products, as a part of the marketing communication also need improvements. If OLDI fails to maintain this service improved it may cause problems in customer relationships and decrease transactions and business for the company. The technical support is also one service that guarantees customers to maintain the business relation for the future. Therefore both services need to be taken into consideration in their development as well as organized to satisfy customer demands.

#### 6.2.2 Suggestions for improving the B2B marketing communications of OLDI

The results showed that the business-to-business marketing communication tools have been very successful in OLDI's business operations. The most positively viewed areas of marketing communication tools in OLDI are sales promotion, public relations, communication via electronic mail and billboard advertisements. According to respondents' opinions, billboards have been one positive way of marketing communications of electronic business and also as a marketing strategy. The same perceived from the marketing communication via sales promotion, public relations and it is beneficial to maintain up-to-date contact via electronic mail. The respondents' answers indicate that OLDI has planned and organized its business-to-business marketing communication tools very successfully.

Further suggestions indicate that some areas of marketing communications need improvements to maintain the success for OLDI. These sectors are OLDI's television, trade magazine advertisements and the personal selling. OLDI should take into consideration its customer's opinions about business operations and its business-to-business marketing communication tools. Respondents' comments give valuable information about the company and its business operations which gives extra value to the company for the near future improvement and enlargement of the business.

### 6.3 Future challenges

Modern technology is changing very rapidly and also business policy being updates in order to satisfy and reach the target customers and having existing customers in business cooperation. The electronics business is an area of business activities where the market is always changing and the demand of the final consumers are very wide, in order to maintain the image of the business the business-to-business marketing communications tools and the proper customer services bearing a valuable perspective. In addition, small and medium-sized companies are becoming more competitive in the same area of business activities, so it is important for OLDI to maintain and follow trends and developments of the customers' services and OLDI's business-to-business marketing communications tools.

### 6.4 Suggestions

There are many areas that would be possible for further research for this case company but one of the most effective research areas would be the efficiency of OLDI's business-to-business marketing communications tools. It would also be a reliable and valuable research area to concentrate on the different categories of OLDI's customers as a research target group. For example categories would be retail customers, dealers, final consumers or OLDI's own retail customers. Another interesting research area would be business expansion possibilities as OLDI is one of the big companies with a good reputation in the Russian federation. The market entry possibilities or strategies can be study to do future research for this case company.

Finally referring to the respondents' communication in the survey, it could be more efficient to concentrate on how to communicate with the target groups through electronic mail than any other communication tools.

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### Appendix 1 Abbreviations

BCG	Boston Consulting Group
B2B	Business-to-Business Marketing
B2C	Business-to-Customer
B2B2C	Business-to-Business-to-Customer
SWOT	Strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats
STN	System - Technology - Network
SME	Small and medium enterprises
IT	Information Technology
IMC	Integrated marketing communication
OLDI	Oleg & Dima
TV	Television
PR	Public Relation

Appendix 2: Questionnaire in English

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is Tuhidul Haque Murad student of Laurea University of applied sciences, Finland. I am currently writing my undergraduate thesis about improving business-to-business customer service level in electronics business through efficient marketing communication. My case company is OLDI, and I have selected you to participate in the research.

Please be kind to fill in the questionnaire attached. Filling the questionnaire should not take longer time than 15 minutes. I really appreciate if you can give some valuable time from your busy schedule to share your opinion about the customer service level and marketing communications.

In this regards, your kind cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Best Regards

Tuhidul Murad

Degree programme in Business Management

Laurea University of Applied Science

Finland.

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS:

Please answer questions by circling one choice

1. Gender:

- A. Male      B. Female

2. Educational Background:

- A. Middle school      B. High school Graduate      C. Secondary level certificate  
D. Polytechnic      E. University

3. Position in the company:

- A.....

4. How long have you been in the business contact with OLDI?

- A. 1-5      B. 6-10      C. 10-15      D. 15-

5. Age:

- A. 20 - 25      B. 26 - 35      C. 35 - 45      D. 46 - 60      E. 61 - >

QUESTIONS RELATED WITH OLDI SERVICES:

Option: 1 - 5 mean following: 1= totally disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= neither agree or nor disagree, 4= somewhat agree, 5= totally agree

Please answer questions by circling one choice

6. OLDI services meet our demands.

- 1                      2                      3                      4                      5

7. We are aware of what kind of service we can get from OLDI.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

8. OLDI has versatile product range.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

9. OLDI Payment/Flexible financial terms meet our demands.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

10. We are happy with OLDI technical service.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

11. We can benefit from the OLDI Loyalty programme.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

12. OLDI sales promotion increases product knowledge.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

13. We can benefit from OLDI warehouse support service.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

14. OLDI can deliver to all destinations.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

15. OLDI have qualified customer services personnel.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

16. OLDI continuously updates the product range with new technology.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

17. We are aware of OLDI special offers.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

### 3. QUESTIONS RELATED WITH MARKETING COMMUNICATION

18. In your opinion, how truly do the characteristics describe the following B2B marketing communication?

Personnel selling:

1. Reliable

2. Convincing

3. Informative

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

Communication via electronic mail

1. Reliable

2. Convincing

3. Informative

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

Web page

1. Reliable

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

2. Convincing

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

3. Informative

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

Seminars and conference

1. Reliable

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

2. Convincing

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

3. Informative

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

Advertisements in trade magazines

1. Reliable

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

2. Convincing

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

3. Informative

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

Trade show

1. Reliable

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

2. Convincing

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

3. Informative

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

Public Relation:

1. Reliable

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

2. Convincing

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

3. Informative

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

Sales promotion:

1. Reliable

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

2. Convincing

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

3. Informative

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

Bail board:

1. Reliable

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

2. Convincing

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

3. Informative

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

TV advertisement:

1. Reliable

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

2. Convincing

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

3. Informative

- A. Untrue
- B. Somewhat untrue
- C. No opinion
- D. Somewhat true
- E. True

Sports sponsorship:

1. Reliable

2. Convincing

3. Informative

A. Untrue

A. Untrue

A. Untrue

B. Somewhat untrue

B. Somewhat untrue

B. Somewhat untrue

C. No opinion

C. No opinion

C. No opinion

D. Somewhat true

D. Somewhat true

D. Somewhat true

E. True

E. True

E. True

#### 4. QUESTIONS RELATED WITH OLDI MARKETING COMMUNICATION

19. In your opinion, how has OLDI succeeded in the areas of marketing communications listed below, Option: 1 - 5 mean following: 1= very unsuccessfully, 2= unsuccessfully, 3= neutral/ no experience, 4= successfully, 5= very successfully

OLDI's Personnel selling:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

OLDI Communication via electronic mail

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

OLDI own Web page ([www.aldi.ru](http://www.aldi.ru))

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Seminars and conference organized by OLDI

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

OLDI's Advertisements in trade magazines

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

OLDI participation in Trade show

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

OLDI Public relation

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

OLDI Sales promotion

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

OLDI Bail board

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

OLDI TV Advertisement

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

OLDI Sponsorship in a football team

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

20. We would be very happy to get advice and suggestions, how OLDI can improve customer service level and marketing communications?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you very much for your response and active participation. Please add your name and phone number on the line below this, in order to participate in the present box lottery.

Name: .....

Phone: .....

Appendix 3: Questionnaire in Russian

Уважаемый господин / госпожа,

Мое имя Tuhidul Haque Murad , я являюсь студентом Университета прикладных наук, Хельсинки, Финляндия.

В настоящее время я работаю над диссертацией на степень магистра тема которой "повышение уровня обслуживания клиента при ведении бизнеса между предприятиями (B2B) в области электроники посредством создания эффективных маркетинговых коммуникаций". Я выбрал компанию ОЛДИ для проведения исследований в этой области .

Пожалуйста, будьте добры заполнить вопросник (прилагается). Заполнение анкеты не займет более 15 минут.

Я буду очень признателен, если вы сможете уделить некоторое время из вашего напряженного графика, поделиться своим мнением об уровне обслуживания клиентов и маркетинговых коммуникаций.

Буду весьма признателен за Ваше сотрудничество.

С уважением

Tuhidul Murad

Степень программ в области управления бизнесом

Laurea Университет прикладных наук

Финляндия.

Общие ВОПРОСЫ:

Пожалуйста ответьте на вопросы, обведя ответ кругом.

1. Пол:

A. Мужчина

B. Женщина

2. Образование:

A. Средняя школа

B. среднее специальное образование

C. Политехник

D. Университет

3. Должность в компании:

A.....

4. Сколько лет Вы работаете с ОЛДИ?

A. 1-5

B. 6-10

C. 10-15

D. 15-

5. Возраст:

A. 20 - 25

B. 26 - 35

C. 35 - 45

D. 46 - 60

E. 61 - >

ВОПРОСЫ, СВЯЗАННЫЕ С УСЛУГАМИ ОЛДИ:

Вариант: 1 - 5 означают следующее: 1 = полностью несогласен(а), 2 = частично не согласен(а), 3 = безразличен (а), 4 = частично согласен(а), 5 = полностью согласен (а).

**Просьба ответить на вопросы, выбрав один вариант**

6. услуги ОЛДИ соответствует нашим требованиям.

1

2

3

4

5

7. Мы знаем, какие услуги мы можем получить от ОЛДИ.

1

2

3

4

5

8. ОЛДИ имеет универсальный ( обширный) ассортимент товаров.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

9. Гибкие финансовые условия ОЛДИ отвечают нашим требованиям.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

10. Мы удовлетворены техническим обслуживанием ОЛДИ

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

11. Мы можем получить выгоду , пользуясь программой лояльности ОЛДИ.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

12. Организация продаж ОЛДИ повышает степень узнаваемости продукта.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

13. Мы мы получем выгоду, пользуясь службой поддержки склада ОЛДИ

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

14. ОЛДИ может доставить продукт в любую запрашиваемую точку.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

15. ОЛДИ имеет квалифицированный персонал по обслуживанию клиентов.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

16. ОЛДИ постоянно обновляет ассортимент продукции с использованием новых технологий.

1                    2                    3                    4                    5

17. Нам известно о специальных предложениях ОЛДИ.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

### 3. ВОПРОСЫ, СВЯЗАННЫЕ С МАРКЕТИНГОВЫМИ КОММУНИКАЦИЯМИ

18. По Вашему мнению, насколько правдивы ( точны) данные B2B используемые при маркетинговых коммуникациях?

**Персонал по продажам:**

1. Надежность

2. Убедительность

3. Информативность

A. Ложь

A. ложь

A. ложь

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

**Сообщение по электронной почте:**

1. Надежность

2. Убедительность

3. Информативность

A. ложь

A. ложь

A. ложь

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

**Веб-страница:**

1. Надежность

2. Убедительность

3. Информативность

A. ложь

A. ложь

A. ложь

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

**Семинары и конференции:**

1. Надежность

2. Убедительность

3. Информативность

A. ложь

A. ложь

A. ложь

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

**Реклама в торговых журналах:**

1. Надежность

2. Убедительность

3. Информативность

A. ложь

A. ложь

A. ложь

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

**Выставки:**

1. Надежность

2. Убедительность

3. Информативность

A. ложь

A. ложь

A. ложь

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

**связи с общественностью:**

1. Надежность

2. Убедительность

3. Информативность

A. ложь

A. ложь

A. ложь

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

**Поощрения при продажах**

1. Надежность

2. Убедительность

3. Информативность

A. ложь

A. ложь

A. ложь

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

**Информация Правления компании (руководства)**

1. Надежность

2. Убедительность

3. Информативность

A. Ложь

A. ложь

A. ложь

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

**ТВ реклама:**

1. Надежность

2. Убедительность

3. Информативность

A. Ложь

A. ложь

A. ложь

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

**Спортивное спонсорство:**

1. Надежность

2. Убедительность

3. Информативность

A. Ложь

A. ложь

A. ложь

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

B. Не полностью соотв.действительности

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

C. Нет мнения

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

D. Достаточно верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

E. Верно

#### 4. QUESTIONS RELATED WITH OLDI MARKETING COMMUNICATION

19. По Вашему мнению, каким образом ОЛДИ добилась успехов в области маркетинговых коммуникаций, перечисленных ниже, вариант: 1 - 5 означает следующее: 1 = очень неудачно, 2 = неудачно, 3 = нейтрально / нет опыта, 4 = успешно, 5 = очень успешно

##### **Продавцы ОЛДИ:**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

##### **Связь по электронной почте ОЛДИ**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

##### **собственные веб-страницы ОЛДИ (www.oldi.ru)**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

##### **Семинары и конференции, организованные ОЛДИ**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

##### **реклама ОЛДИ в торговых журналах**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

##### **участие ОЛДИ в выставках**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

##### **общественные отношения ОЛДИ**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**Поощрения при продажах ОЛДИ**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**Правление, руководство ОЛДИ**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**ТВ Реклама ОЛДИ**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**Спонсорство ОЛДИ**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

20. Мы были бы очень рады получить советы и рекомендации о том, как ОЛДИ может повысить уровень обслуживания клиентов и маркетинговых коммуникаций

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Большое спасибо за Ваш ответ и активное участие. Укажите в данном поле свое имя и телефонный номер, для участия в лотерее.

Имя:.....

Телефон:.....